IN THIS ISSUE: "RUDE AWAKENING"

By Flint Dille and Buzz Dixon. Illustrated by Paul Smith and Frank Cirocco. Rocketing into a Twenty-Fifth Century world of genetically engineered warriors, vicious space pirates and greedy corporate overlords comes Buck Rogers—the last hope of a dying Earth!

Plus: THE GAUNTLET boardgame, created by award-winning game designer Tom Wham! With bonus Full-color game pieces bound right in.

Also: An 11 page preview of the soon-to-be-released BUCK ROGERS © XXVc™ role-playing game designed by Mike Pondsmith, creator of R. Talsorian's CYBERPUNK role-playing game!

TSR, Inc.

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THE GAUNTLET

THE ORIGINAL SPACE HERO

BUCK ROGERS

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1 of 3

PREMIERE ISSUE

COMICS MODULE

You're looking at this book suspiciously

. . .I can tell. You are wondering—is this a *game* or a *comic??*

•If you are a comics reader, you are thinking. . .is this thing for me?? It's from TSR—TSR makes games. Better not read this, I might fall into a cerebral whirlpool I can never get out of—I might begin to understand this stuff. But resist the urge to put this book down—because comics fans will love 33 pages of great full color comic stories written and illustrated by some of the best new and established talents in the business!

•Maybe you're a gamer and you're thinking. . .what is TSR doing in comics!? Has the company undergone yet another strange transition? But some of this is familiar—if you play TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game, you are acquainted with *13:ASSASSIN* and *The Final Weapon*. If you play SPI Games, or THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER™ game, then *Warhawks* will seem familiar. Maybe you play XXVc™ Role-Playing game or BATTLE FOR THE TWENTY-FIFTH CENTURY game—then you already know Buck Rogers and the space pirate Black Barney. Hmm. . .read the comic. . .play the game. . .get the stats.

What you are holding in your hands is a "Comics Module"—the result of a collision between comics and games. We're starting out with five monthly titles, each filled with 40 pages of excitement—enough to satisfy both your comics and gaming appetites!

In the **BUCK ROGERS®** comics module, we have the original story-a classic adventure in a plausible future, designed to tie in with the BUCK ROGERS®/XXVc™ Role-Playing game.

R.I.P.—We all hope to Rest In Peace when we die. Unfortunately not everyone gets the opportunity—and are forced to dwell in the purgatory of knowing their *killers* got off scot-free! Marv Wolfman recounts their horrible tales of dark evil and revenge, and artist Pat Olliffe makes them look pretty for the wake. Scott Haring's nasty little THE BATTLE FOR SMITHVILLE game will help you while away the hours between now and when you. . .*Rest In Peace.*

INTRUDER—You have just tuned in to an alternate plane of reality—*everything* you can imagine exists on some stratum of the universe. When *Eric Corbin* unlocks the key to take a look, he arouses the wrath of the Master of Chaos—and we all will have hell to pay! Intruder is a comic book of limitless scope, and the basis of a system that will tie together TSR's many different gaming worlds.

WARHAWKS and **HAPPY CAMPERS**—A globe-shattering war rocks the world in the year 2053. The good guys win, but when the war criminals escape into *time*, the Warhawks must venture back in history to nail them. Take part in the final assault on the Zetan bunker in Paul Lidberg's RAID ON THE BUNKER game. The Happy Campers are stories from the news that was unfit to print. Some say it is fiction, others say it's a true story with the names changed to protect the guilty.

13:ASSASSIN and **FINAL WEAPON** features the 1990's adventures of TSR's mystical spy, Agent 13. The leader of an ancient society was literally ripped apart by 13 in 1939 and his head has been stored in a box ever since. Now he's back with a vengeance. In Final Weapon, we begin the destruction of the spy organizations WEB and ORION. The 13:ASSASSIN Collector Game Cards debut in this issue, and will expand in future issues.

Still suspicious? What's life for if you don't take some chances! Test drive this thing-read the stories, and tear out some pages and play the game. Then drop us a line, let us know what you think. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Until next issue— Flint

staff

- FLINT DILLE, Creative Director
- ROGER SLIFER, Aquisitions Editor
- HILDY MESNIK, Editor
- JUSTIN McCORMACK, Marketing Director
- CLAYTON PREUITT, Design

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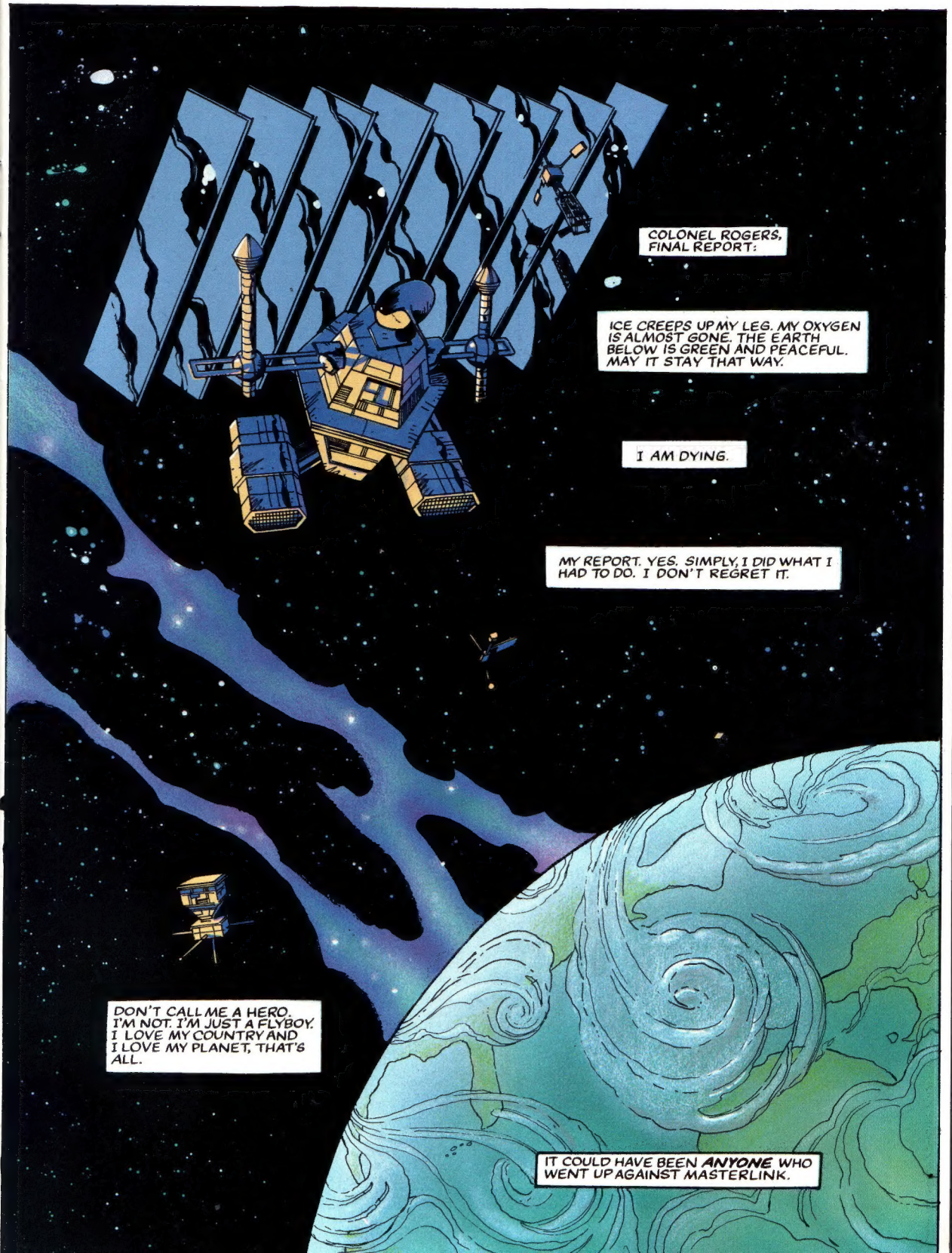
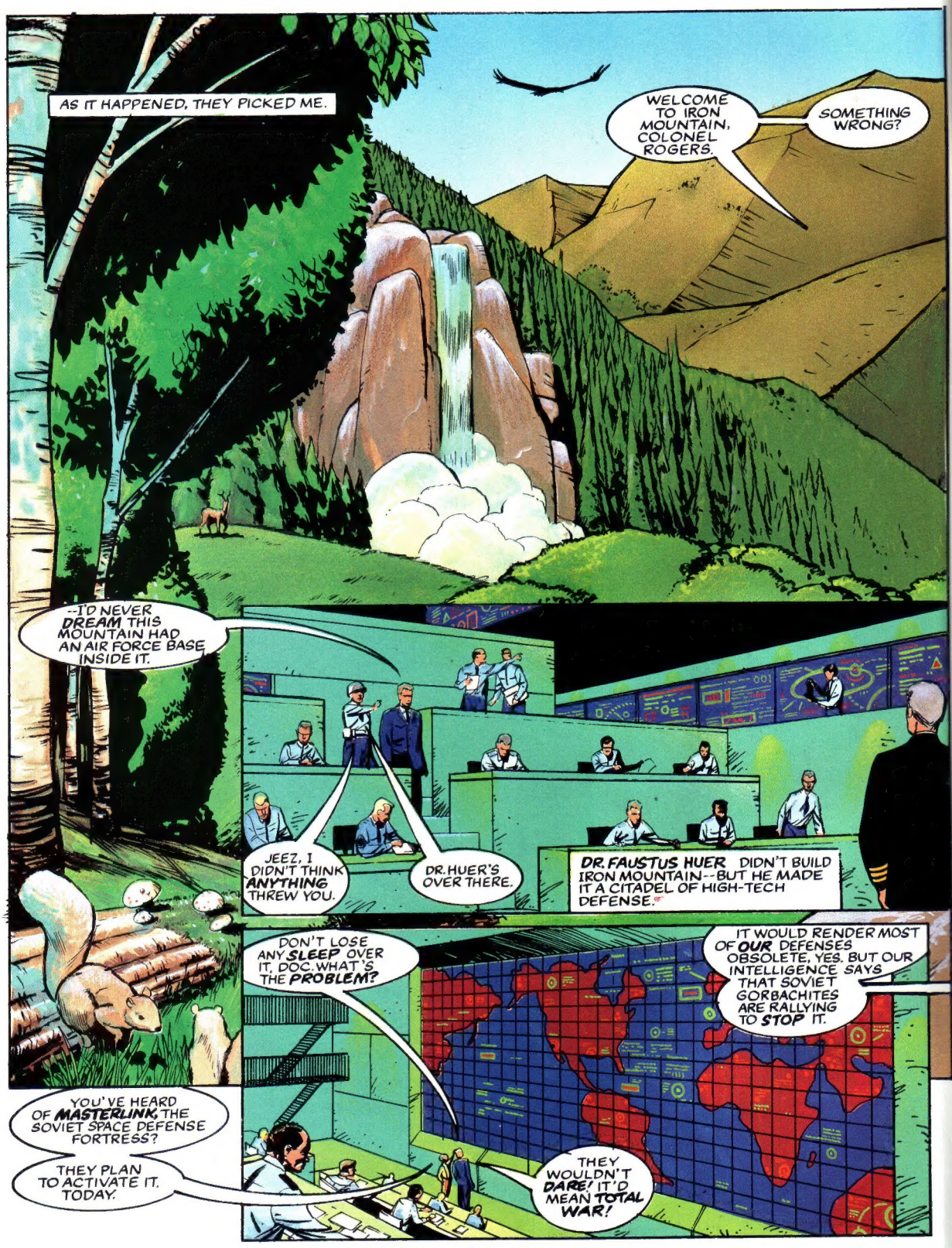
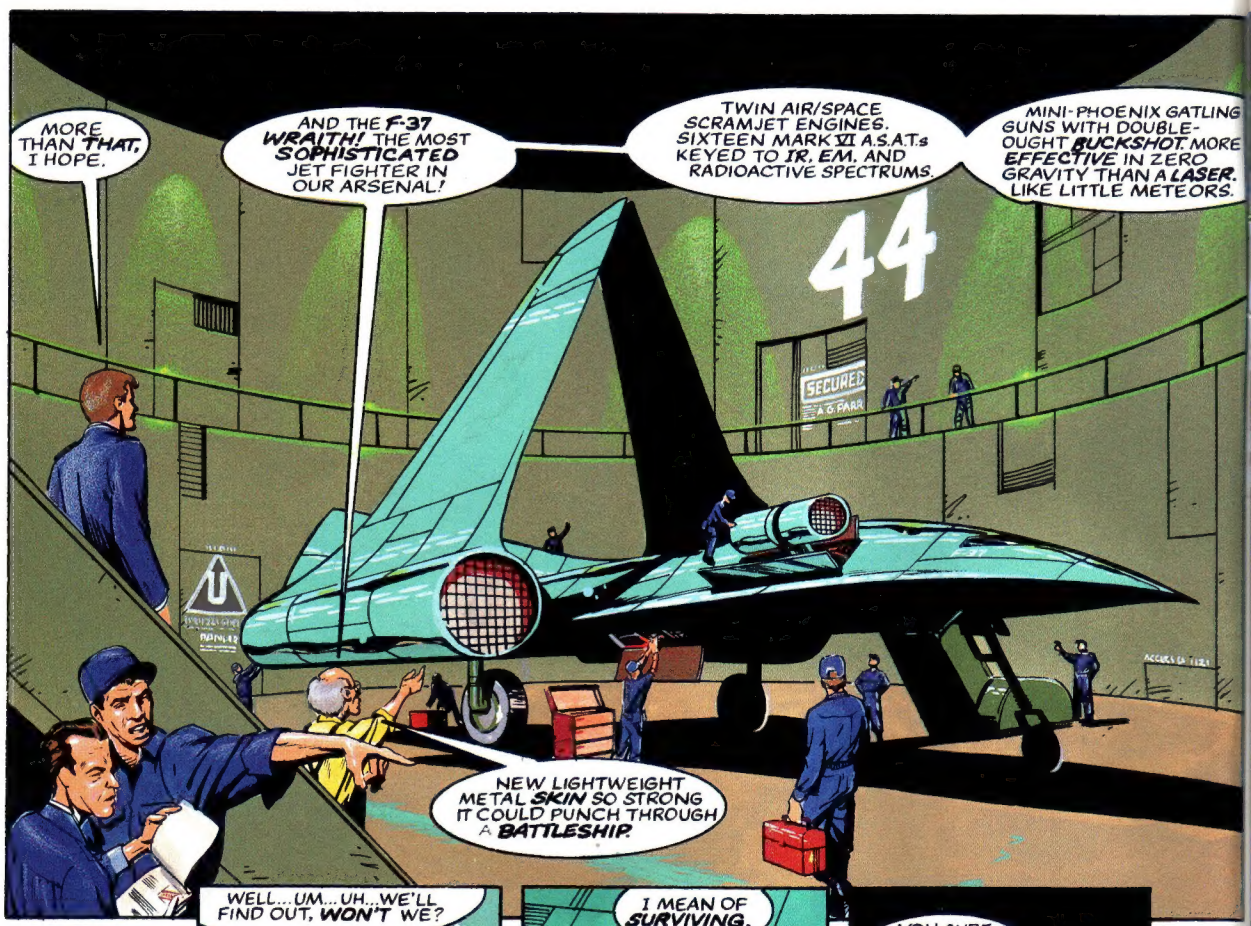

COLONEL ROGERS, FINAL REPORT:
ICE CREEPS UP MY LEG. MY OXYGEN IS ALMOST GONE. THE EARTH BELOW IS GREEN AND PEACEFUL. MAY IT STAY THAT WAY.
I AM DYING.
MY REPORT. YES. SIMPLY, I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO. I DON'T REGRET IT.
DON'T CALL ME A HERO. I'M NOT. I'M JUST A FLYBOY. I LOVE MY COUNTRY AND I LOVE MY PLANET, THAT'S ALL.
IT COULD HAVE BEEN ANYONE WHO WENT UP AGAINST MASTERLINK.

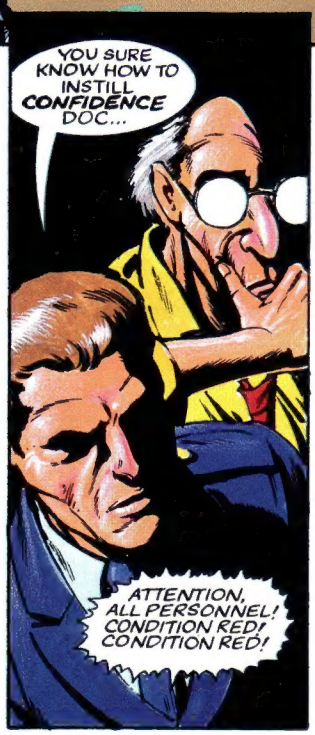

AS IT HAPPENED, THEY PICKED ME.
WELCOME TO IRON MOUNTAIN, COLONEL ROGERS.
SOMETHING WRONG?
--I'D NEVER DREAM THIS MOUNTAIN HAD AN AIR FORCE BASE INSIDE IT.
JEEZ, I DIDN'T THINK ANYTHING THREW YOU.
DR. HUER'S OVER THERE.
DR. FAUSTUS HUER DIDN'T BUILD IRON MOUNTAIN--BUT HE MADE IT A CITADEL OF HIGH-TECH DEFENSE.
DON'T LOSE ANY SLEEP OVER IT, DOC. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
IT WOULD RENDER MOST OF OUR DEFENSES OBSOLETE, YES. BUT OUR INTELLIGENCE SAYS THAT SOVIET GORBACHITES ARE RALLYING TO STOP IT.
YOU'VE HEARD OF MASTERLINK, THE SOVIET SPACE DEFENSE FORTRESS?
THEY PLAN TO ACTIVATE IT. TODAY.
THEY WOULDN'T DARE! IT'D MEAN TOTAL WAR!

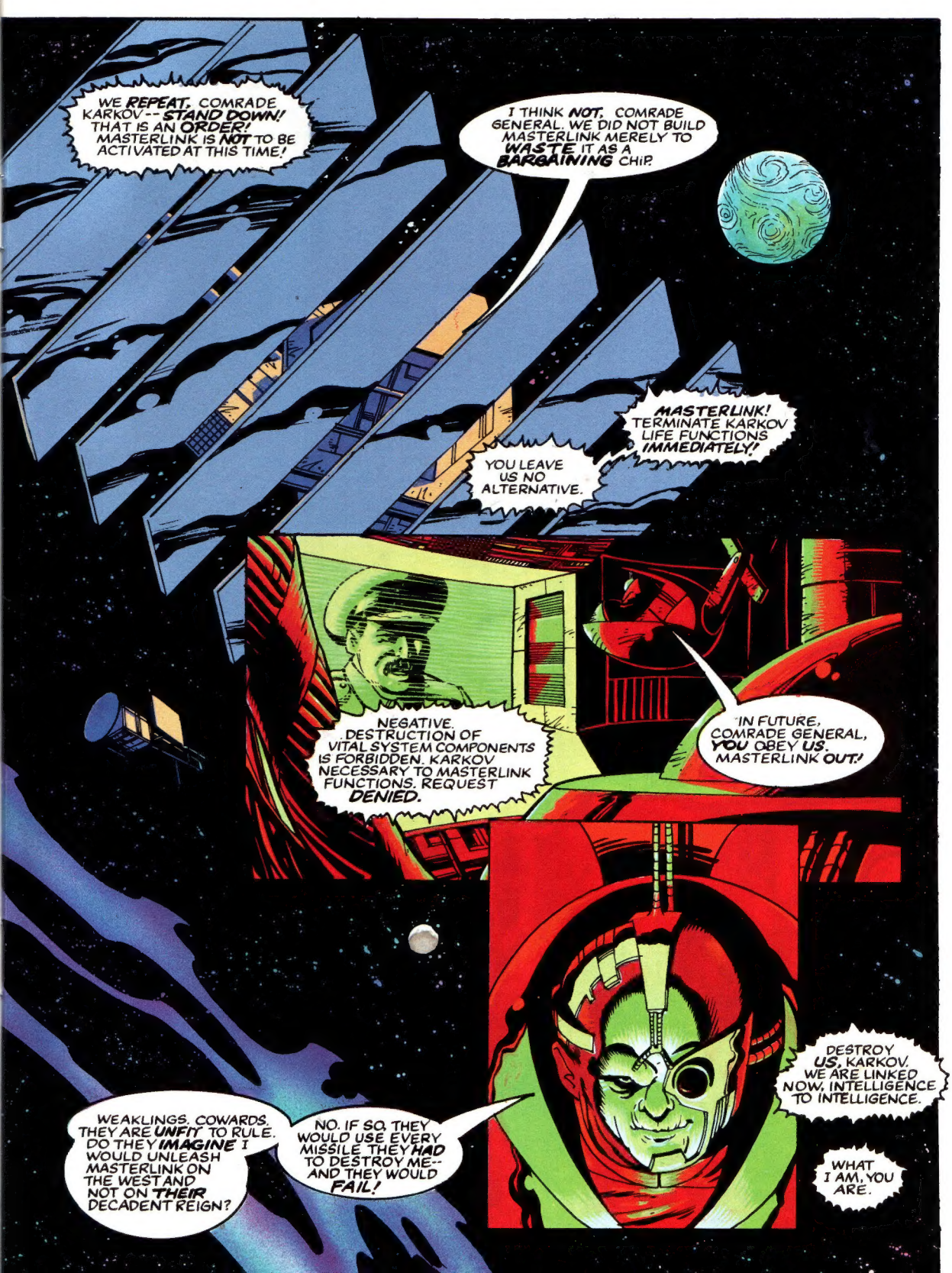
OH. NO. THIS PLACE ALWAYS THREW ME.
I GREW UP IN THESE PARTS, AND IF NOT FOR MY SECURITY CLEARANCE--
A BRILLIANT MAN. MY FRIEND.
I DON'T BLAME HIM FOR ANYTHING.
GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, DOC. IT'S BEEN YEARS.
BUCK. I'M SORRY. I ONLY ASKED THAT THEY SEND A TOP GUN, BUT...
I FEARED-- NO, I KNEW-- IT WOULD BE YOU.
WE HAVE EVERY ASSURANCE THEY'D BE JUST AS HAPPY IF WE TOOK MASTERLINK OUT BEFORE ACTIVATION. EASIER SAID THAN DONE.
MASTERLINK IS A CYBERNETIC HOOKUP BETWEEN THEIR MOST ADVANCED COMPUTER SYSTEM AND RUSSIA'S BEST FIGHTER PILOT.
YOU.
YEAH. SO WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO THROW AT IT?

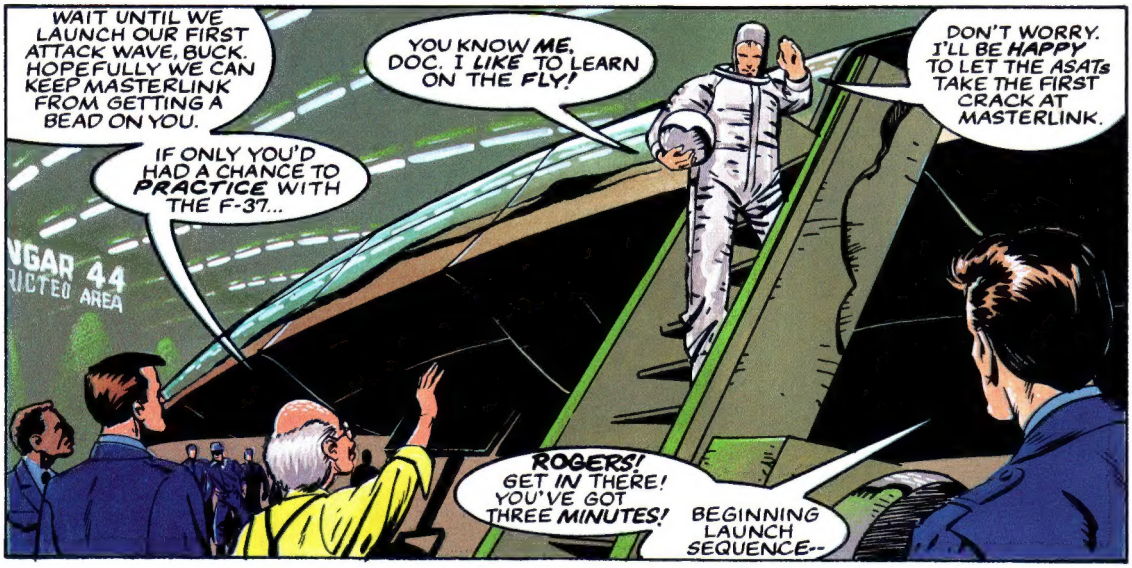

MORE THAN THAT, I HOPE.
AND THE F-37 WRAITH! THE MOST SOPHISTICATED JET FIGHTER IN OUR ARSENAL!
TWIN AIR/SPACE SCRAMJET ENGINES. SIXTEEN MARK VI A.S.A.T.s KEYED TO IR, EM, AND RADIOACTIVE SPECTRUMS.
MINI-PHOENIX GATLING GUNS WITH DOUBLE-OUGHT BUCKSHOT. MORE EFFECTIVE IN ZERO GRAVITY THAN A LASER. LIKE LITTLE METEORS.
44
SECURED
A.G. FARR
NEW LIGHTWEIGHT METAL SKIN SO STRONG IT COULD PUNCH THROUGH A BATTLESHIP.

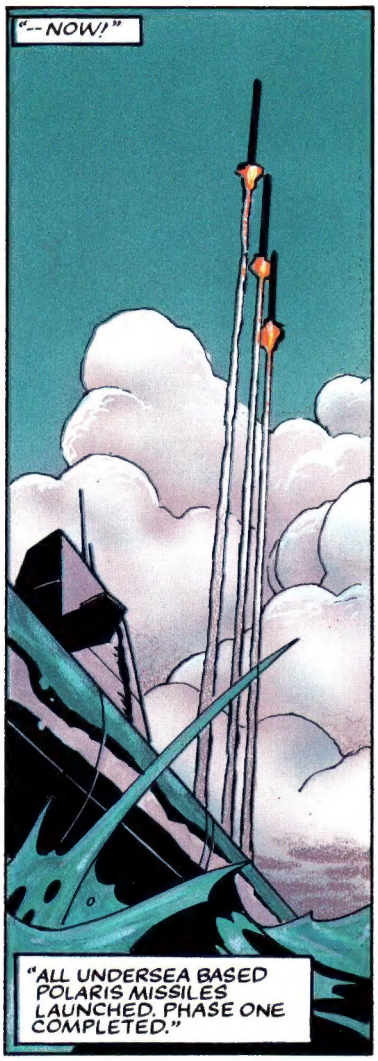
SOUNDS GREAT. DOES IT WORK?
WELL... UM... UH... WE'LL FIND OUT, WON'T WE?
OOOOO-KAY.
SO WHAT KIND OF ODDS ARE THEY GIVING ME IN VEGAS?
OF DESTROYING MASTERLINK? FIGURING MARGINS OF ERROR--

I MEAN OF SURVIVING.
CRYO
OH, THAT. DIDN'T I TELL YOU? WE'VE WHIPPED UP A FOOLPROOF FAILSAFE--
--ONE OF THE HAMSTERS LIVED ANYWAY.

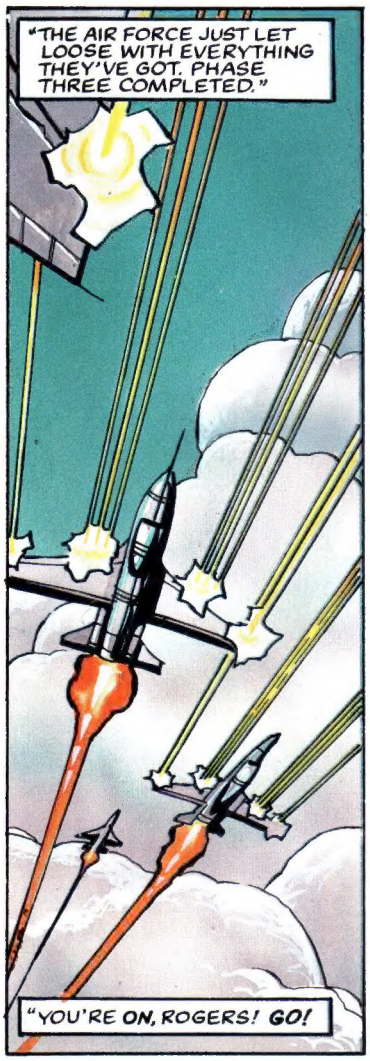

YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO INSTILL CONFIDENCE DOC...
ATTENTION, ALL PERSONNEL! CONDITION RED! CONDITION RED!

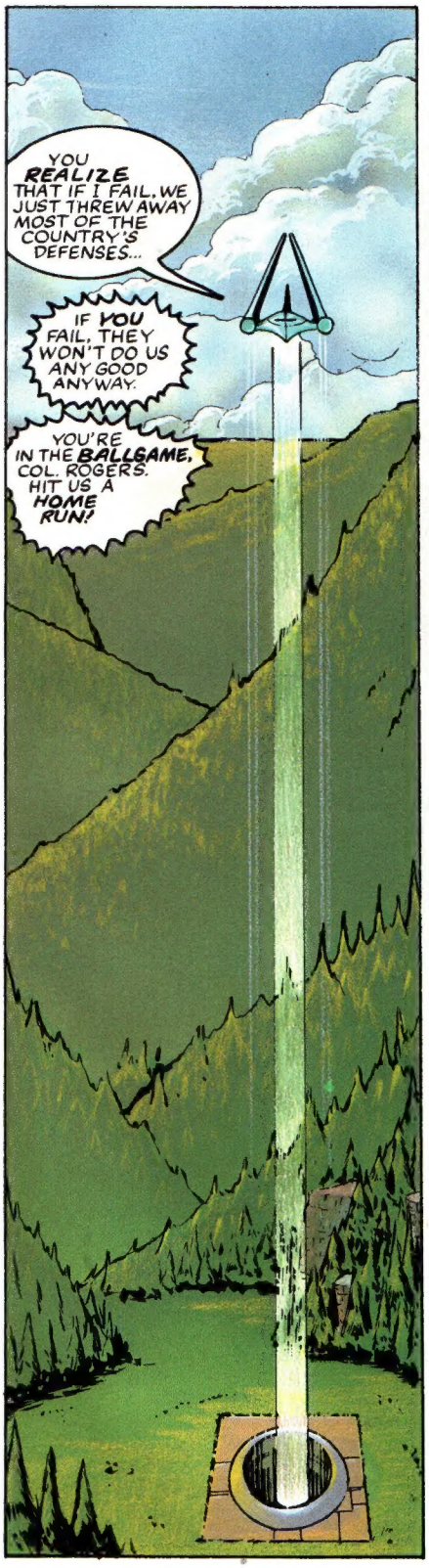

WE REPEAT, COMRADE KARKOV -- STAND DOWN! THAT IS AN ORDER! MASTERLINK IS NOT TO BE ACTIVATED AT THIS TIME!
I THINK NOT, COMRADE GENERAL. WE DID NOT BUILD MASTERLINK MERELY TO WASTE IT AS A BARGAINING CHIP.
MASTERLINK! TERMINATE KARKOV LIFE FUNCTIONS IMMEDIATELY!
YOU LEAVE US NO ALTERNATIVE.
NEGATIVE. DESTRUCTION OF VITAL SYSTEM COMPONENTS IS FORBIDDEN. KARKOV NECESSARY TO MASTERLINK FUNCTIONS. REQUEST DENIED.
IN FUTURE, COMRADE GENERAL, YOU OBEY US. MASTERLINK OUT!
DESTROY US, KARKOV. WE ARE LINKED NOW. INTELLIGENCE TO INTELLIGENCE.
WHAT I AM, YOU ARE.
WEAKLINGS. COWARDS. THEY ARE UNFIT TO RULE. DO THEY IMAGINE I WOULD UNLEASH MASTERLINK ON THE WEST AND NOT ON THEIR DECADENT REIGN?
NO. IF SO, THEY WOULD USE EVERY MISSILE THEY HAD TO DESTROY ME -- AND THEY WOULD FAIL!


WAIT UNTIL WE LAUNCH OUR FIRST ATTACK WAVE, BUCK. HOPEFULLY WE CAN KEEP MASTERLINK FROM GETTING A BEAD ON YOU.
YOU KNOW ME, DOC. I LIKE TO LEARN ON THE FLY!
DON'T WORRY. I'LL BE HAPPY TO LET THE ASATs TAKE THE FIRST CRACK AT MASTERLINK.
IF ONLY YOU'D HAD A CHANCE TO PRACTICE WITH THE F-37...
NGAR 44
RICTED AREA
ROGERS! GET IN THERE! YOU'VE GOT THREE MINUTES!
BEGINNING LAUNCH SEQUENCE--

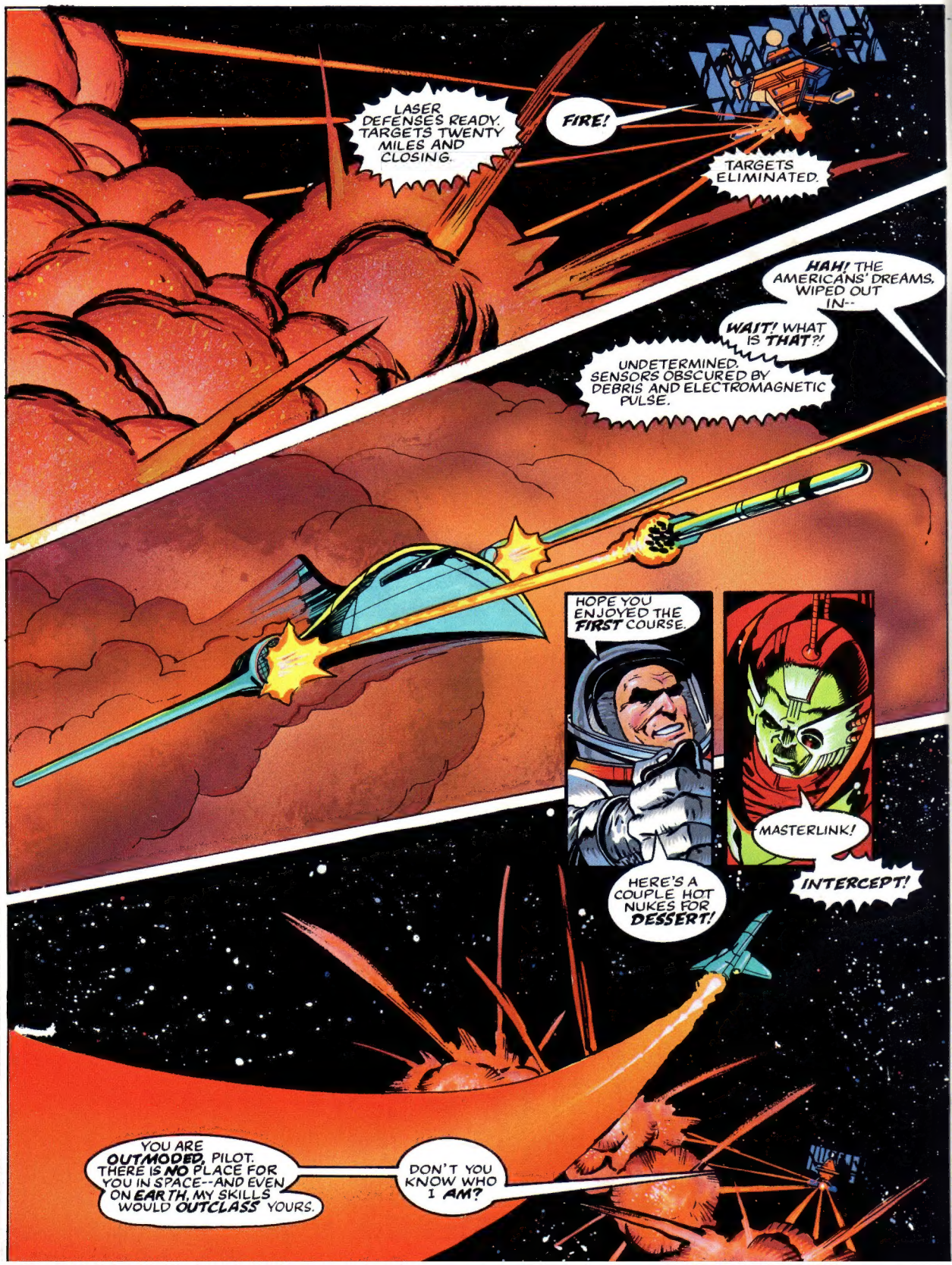

"--NOW!"
"ALL UNDERSEA BASED POLARIS MISSILES LAUNCHED. PHASE ONE COMPLETED."

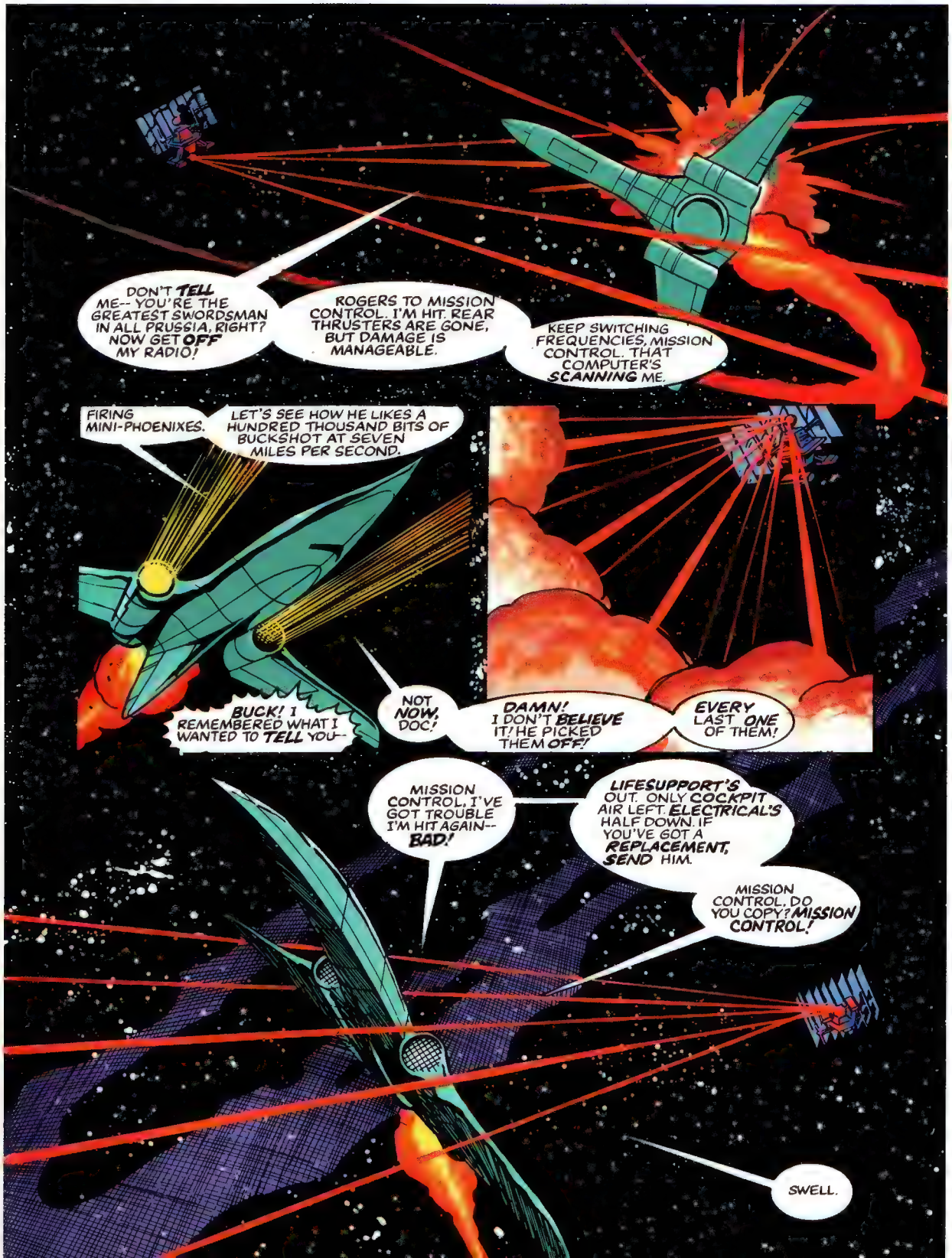
"NORAD REPORTS ALL LAND-BASED ICBMs IN AIR, AIMED AT MASTERLINK. PHASE TWO COMPLETED."


"THE AIR FORCE JUST LET LOOSE WITH EVERYTHING THEY'VE GOT. PHASE THREE COMPLETED."
"YOU'RE ON, ROGERS! GO!


YOU REALIZE THAT IF I FAIL, WE JUST THREW AWAY MOST OF THE COUNTRY'S DEFENSES...
IF YOU FAIL, THEY WON'T DO US ANY GOOD ANYWAY.
YOU'RE IN THE BALLGAME, COL. ROGERS. HIT US A HOME RUN!

KARKOV: SEVEN WAVES OF INCOMING ASATs DETECTED, FOLLOWED BY HUNDREDS OF SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES. SENSORS INDICATE NUCLEAR PAYLOADS.
ORIGIN: AMERICAN.
AH. EXERCISE. GOOD.
A MAN NEEDS EXERCISE.


LASER DEFENSES READY. TARGETS TWENTY MILES AND CLOSING.
FIRE!
TARGETS ELIMINATED.
HAH! THE AMERICANS' DREAMS, WIPED OUT IN--
WAIT! WHAT IS THAT?!
UNDETERMINED. SENSORS OBSCURED BY DEBRIS AND ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE.
HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE FIRST COURSE.
MASTERLINK!
INTERCEPT!
HERE'S A COUPLE HOT NUKES FOR DESSERT!
DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?
YOU ARE OUTMODED, PILOT. THERE IS NO PLACE FOR YOU IN SPACE--AND EVEN ON EARTH, MY SKILLS WOULD OUTCLASS YOURS.

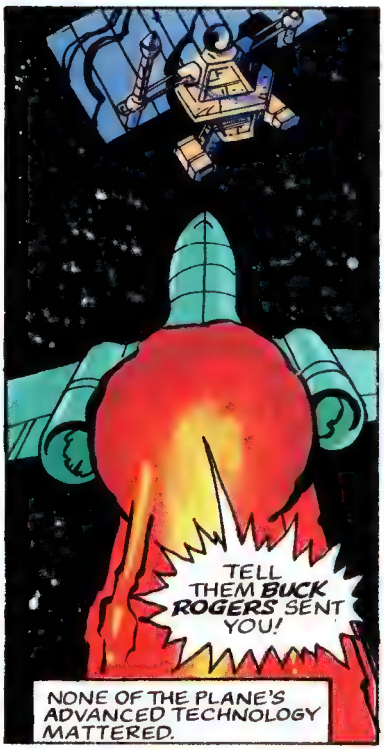

DON'T TELL ME-- YOU'RE THE GREATEST SWORDSMAN IN ALL PRUSSIA, RIGHT? NOW GET OFF MY RADIO!
ROGERS TO MISSION CONTROL. I'M HIT. REAR THRUSTERS ARE GONE, BUT DAMAGE IS MANAGEABLE.
KEEP SWITCHING FREQUENCIES, MISSION CONTROL. THAT COMPUTER'S SCANNING ME.
FIRING MINI-PHOENIXES.
LET'S SEE HOW HE LIKES A HUNDRED THOUSAND BITS OF BUCKSHOT AT SEVEN MILES PER SECOND.
BUCK! I REMEMBERED WHAT I WANTED TO TELL YOU--
NOT NOW, DOC!
DAMN! I DON'T BELIEVE IT! HE PICKED THEM OFF!
EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM!
MISSION CONTROL, I'VE GOT TROUBLE I'M HIT AGAIN-- BAD!
LIFESUPPORT'S OUT. ONLY COCKPIT AIR LEFT. ELECTRICAL'S HALF DOWN. IF YOU'VE GOT A REPLACEMENT, SEND HIM.
MISSION CONTROL, DO YOU COPY? MISSION CONTROL!
SWELL.

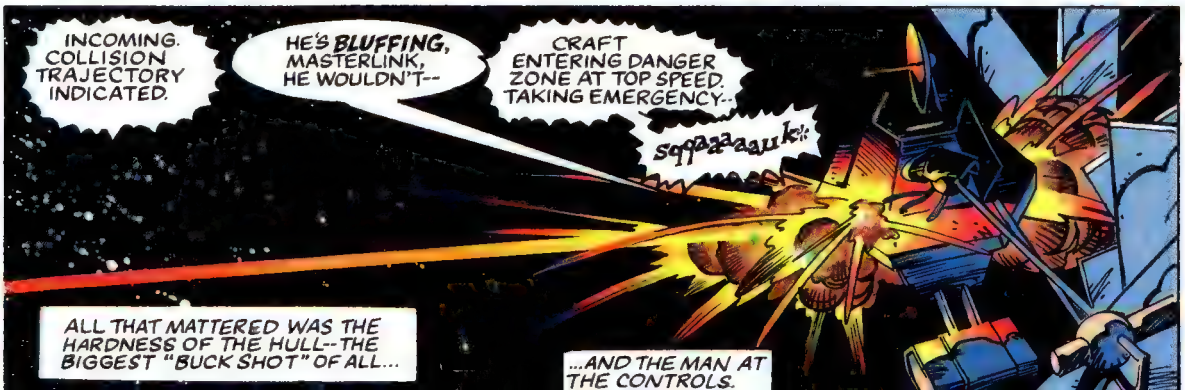
COMMANDER KARKOV! COLONEL ROGERS! CEASE HOSTILITIES AND RETURN TO EARTH IMMEDIATELY!
NO!
OUR TWO COUNTRIES HAVE AGREED TO A MUTUAL NON-AGGRESSION PACT. THIS SHOOTING WAR IS OVER!
WE ARE GREATER THAN YOU, MASTERLINK AND I
FULL ACTIVATION WILL BE COMPLETED IN SECONDS--AND THEN...
...I WILL BE IMMORTAL! MY MIND ONE WITH MASTERLINK'S--FOREVER! SPREADING THROUGH SATELLITES--DOWNLOADED TO COMPUTERS ACROSS THE THE WORLD...
THE MASTER OF INTELLIGENCE, HUMAN AND ARTIFICIAL...EARTH AND SPACE LOCKED ETERNALLY IN MY GRIP...
AND YOUR PILOT WILL BE ONLY THE FIRST TO DIE!
COL. ROGERS! IGNORE PREVIOUS ORDERS! YOU HAVE EVERYONE'S PERMISSION--WIPE HIM OUT!
COL. ROGERS? COL. ROGERS!

IN THE SILENCE OF SPACE THERE WERE NO EXPLOSIONS JUST THE CHILLING SHUDDER OF THE WRAITH DISINTEGRATING AROUND ME.
I KNEW THEN I WOULDN'T COME BACK.
KARKOV WAS RIGHT ABOUT MASTERLINK. I COULDN'T OUTFIGHT IT. I COULDN'T OUTFLY IT.

MY AMMO WAS GONE. MY POWER WAS SHOT. BARELY ON. WITHOUT RETROS, I'D NEVER MAKE IT BACK THROUGH THE ATMOSPHERE.
I HAD FUEL, AND I HAD STEERING, AND THAT WAS IT.
WHOEVER FINDS THIS BLACK BOX, PLEASE PASS THIS ALONG TO DOC HUER:

IN THE END. THE WEAPONS COUNTED FOR NOTHING.
WHEN YOU PUNCH THROUGH THE ROOF OF HELL, KARKOV--


TELL THEM BUCK ROGERS SENT YOU!
NONE OF THE PLANE'S ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY MATTERED.


INCOMING. COLLISION TRAJECTORY INDICATED.
HE'S BLUFFING, MASTERLINK, HE WOULDN'T--
CRAFT ENTERING DANGER ZONE AT TOP SPEED. TAKING EMERGENCY--
sqqaaaauk!!
ALL THAT MATTERED WAS THE HARDNESS OF THE HULL--THE BIGGEST "BUCK SHOT" OF ALL...
...AND THE MAN AT THE CONTROLS.

MASTERLINK IS GONE. ONLY DEBRIS REMAINS.
I'M RELEASING MY BLACK BOX. IN THE HOPE IT WILL BE RECOVERED. I WANT THE WORLD TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.
MY PLANE IS DISINTEGRATING, USELESS. ICE FORMS ON MY CHEEK. THERE'S NO MORE OXYGEN.
I'M OUT OF CONTROL, SPINNING INTO SPACE. I WISH I COULD SEE THE EARTH JUST ONE MORE TIME.
IT'S NOT SO BAD, DYING. NOT SUCH A BAD TRADE.
I DIE, THE EARTH LIVES. A GOOD TRADE. A GOOD TRADE.
I'D DO IT AGAIN

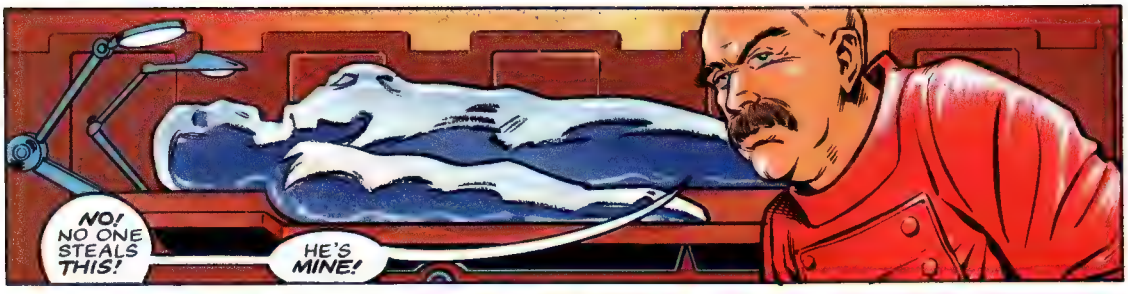
THE BLACK DEPTHS OF SPACE, FIVE CENTURIES LATER.
IN THE FORGOTTEN WASTES OF THE ASTEROID BELT, THERE IS A DREAM OUT OF TIME. THEY CALL IT ANDRESON'S DREAM.
RUDE AWAKENING
PROFESSOR ANDRESON, THE ASTEROID BELT
AT LAST... AT LAST... FIFTEEN YEARS...
THE SCRIMPING AND SAVING... RIDICULE AT THE UNIVERSITY... ALL WORTH IT! I TOLD THEM! I KNEW!
NOW THE PRIZE IS MINE...
WILMA DEERING, THE ASTEROID BELT
DEERING TO NEO, OVER. ANDRESON'S GOING FOR THE TREASURE.
WHAT IF HE'S RIGHT? IF IT'S NOT A MYTH?
WE CAN'T LET RAM GET THEIR HANDS ON IT!
ATTENTION, ALL RAM EXECUTIVES. HOLZERHEIN SPEAKING.
WE HAVE INTERCEPTED A CURIOUS NEO TRANSMISSION.
PLEASE REPORT ON ANY RUMORED TREASURES IN THE ASTEROID BELT...
HOLZERHEIN, MARS

ARDALA, THE PLEASURE PLANETOID
...AND BOTH RAM AND NEO WANT IT? Hmmm...
PUT OUT THE WORD. A MONTH'S USE OF THE, uh, FACILITIES TO WHOEVER BRINGS ME THIS..." TREASURE."
KANE, EARTH
WILMA'S WHERE?
IT WAS IN NEO'S INTERESTS TO NEGOTIATE WITH ANDRESON BEFORE HE LAUNCHED. YOU SHOULD HAVE LET ME GO.
I WOULD HAVE CUT A "KILLER" DEAL...
BLACK BARNEY, SOMEWHERE IN THE VOID
ME AND THE CREW, WE GOT THIS LITTLE BET.
SEEMS THEY THINK YOU'LL BLACK OUT FROM THE PAIN BEFORE YOU TELL ME WHERE ANDRESON'S GOING.
ME, I THINK YOU'RE TOUGHER THAN THAT...
QUIETLY, UNNOTICED BY MANY, IT RIPPLES ACROSS THE SOLAR SYSTEM. THE RIPPLE BECOMES A WAVE...
...THE DREAM A NIGHTMARE...
...PITTING WORLDS AGAINST WORLDS, FOR THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN RACE...

I'VE CALCULATED CORRECTLY. I KNOW I HAVE! WHERE--
PING! PING! PING!
THE SCANNERS! YES!
YES!
THE GREATEST ASTROARCHEOLOGICAL FIND OF ALL TIME! MY REPUTATION... MY NAME WILL BE...
I'LL BE A LEGEND IN THE FIELD!
CAREFUL... CAREFUL... MUSTN'T DAMAGE IT.
SURPRISINGLY INTACT AFTER CENTURIES OF DRIFTING THROUGH SPACE... THEY KNEW HOW TO BUILD THINGS TO LAST IN THOSE DAYS...
OHHHH!
FINALLY!
IT'S HIM!

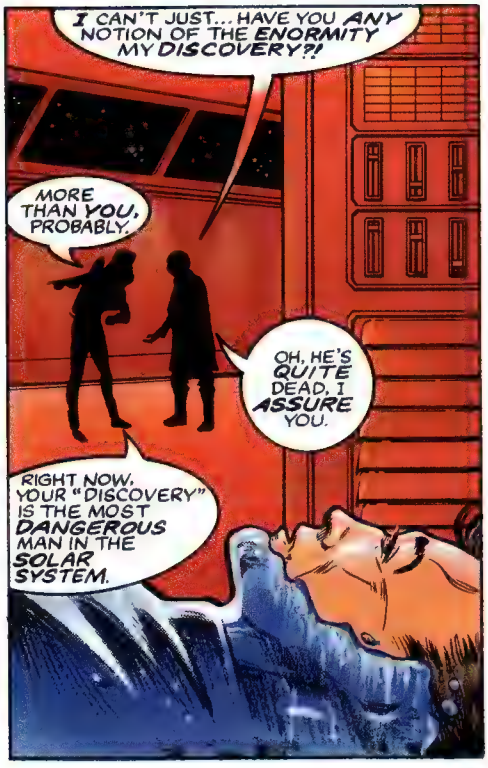
BUCK ROGERS!

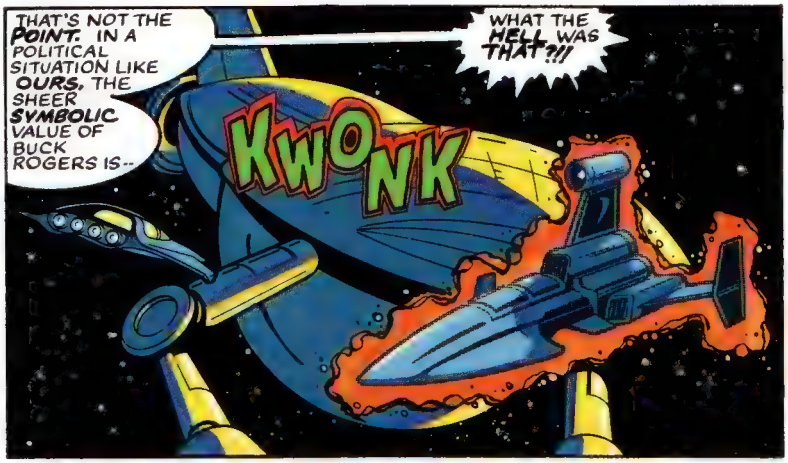
PROFESSOR ANDRESON! THIS IS WILMA DEERING! I'M WITH NEO! COME IN, PLEASE!
IT IS ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE THAT I COME ABOARD RIGHT NOW!


NO! NO ONE STEALS THIS!
HE'S MINE!

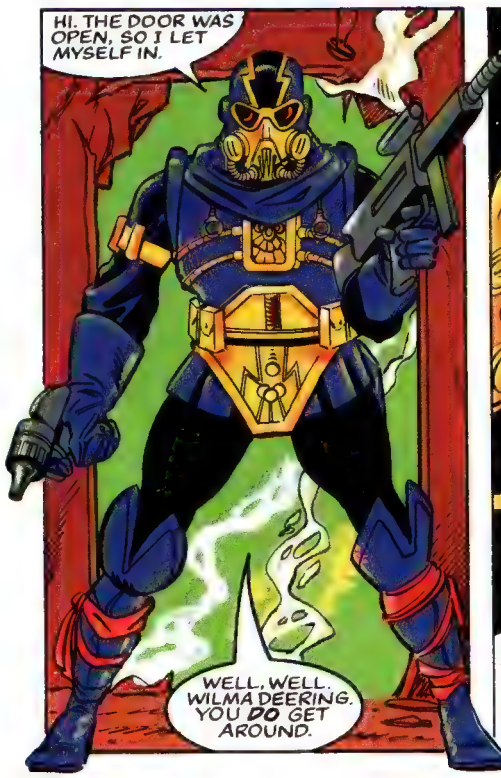
I DON'T WANT TO STEAL IT, PROFESSOR.
YOUR LIFE IS IN DANGER. PLEASE LET ME ABOARD.
WELL... IF YOU MUST...
BUT I'M NOT SHARING THE CREDIT!

MOMENTS LATER...
PACK UP YOUR THINGS, PROFESSOR. WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE.
RAM CRUISERS CLOSING IN FAST.

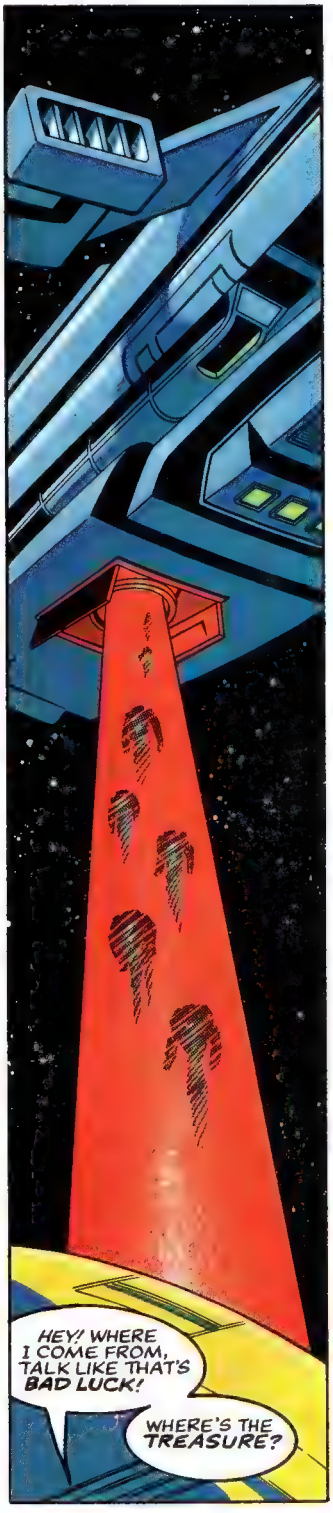

I CAN'T JUST... HAVE YOU ANY NOTION OF THE ENORMITY MY DISCOVERY?!
MORE THAN YOU, PROBABLY.
OH, HE'S QUITE DEAD, I ASSURE YOU.
RIGHT NOW, YOUR "DISCOVERY" IS THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

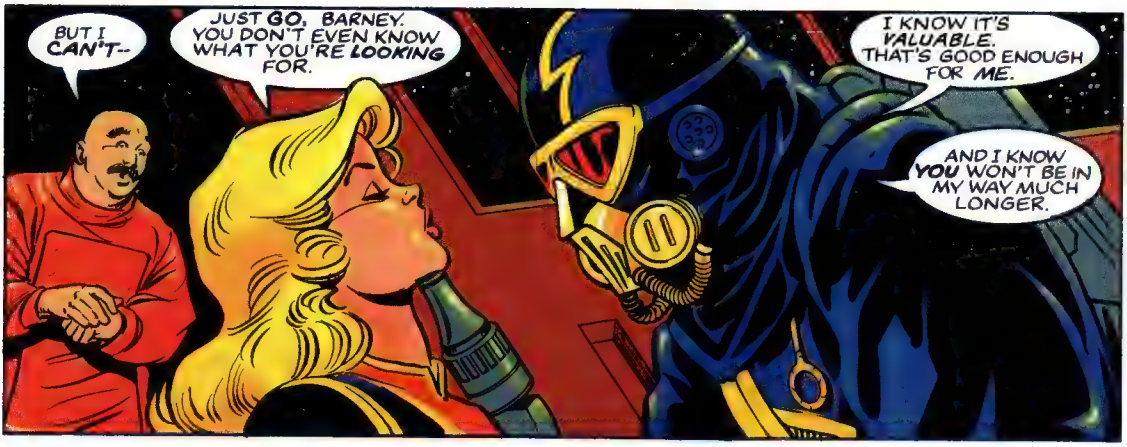

THAT'S NOT THE POINT. IN A POLITICAL SITUATION LIKE OURS, THE SHEER SYMBOLIC VALUE OF BUCK ROGERS IS--
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!!
KWONK

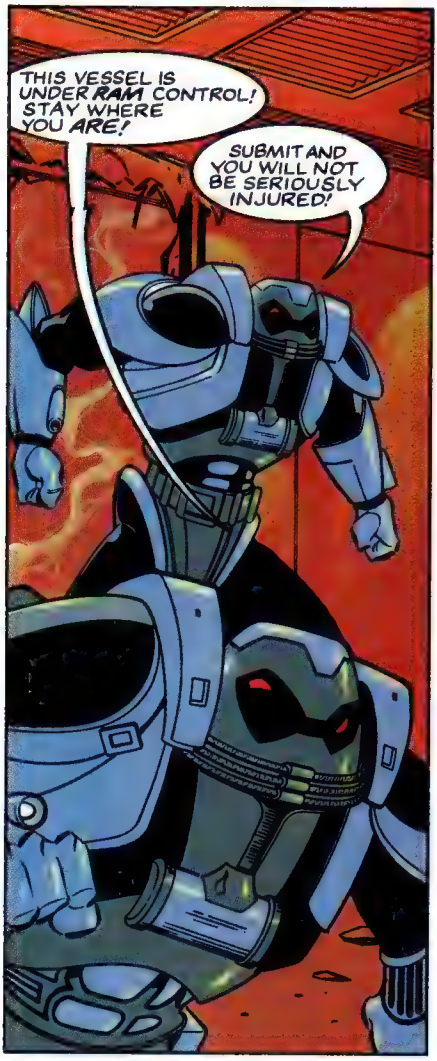
KA-THOOM!

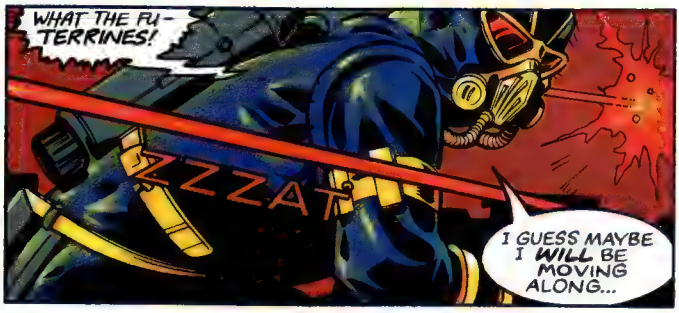

HI. THE DOOR WAS OPEN, SO I LET MYSELF IN.
WELL, WELL. WILMA DEERING. YOU DO GET AROUND.

BLACK BARNEY.
B-B-B... YOU KNOW THIS... THIS...
ASTEROID PIRATE, PROBABLY THE MOST RUTHLESS. THE BOUNTY ON HIM WOULD MAKE YOU RICH QUICK.


HEY! WHERE I COME FROM, TALK LIKE THAT'S BAD LUCK!
WHERE'S THE TREASURE?


BUT I CAN'T--
JUST GO, BARNEY. YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
I KNOW IT'S VALUABLE. THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.
AND I KNOW YOU WON'T BE IN MY WAY MUCH LONGER.


THIS VESSEL IS UNDER RAM CONTROL! STAY WHERE YOU ARE!
SUBMIT AND YOU WILL NOT BE SERIOUSLY INJURED!


WHAT THE FU- TERRINES!
ZZZAT!
I GUESS MAYBE I WILL BE MOVING ALONG...

TAKE COVER, PROFESSOR. I'LL HAVE TO BLAST OUR WAY OUT!
NO! NO SHOOTING! WE CAN'T RISK DAMAGING THE BODY!

ATTENTION! THIS VESSEL IS UNDER RAM CONTROL! STAY WHERE YOU ARE!
BASTARDS! HE WAS NO THREAT TO YOU!
PROFESSOR!
THIS VESSEL IS UNDER RAM CONTROL! STAY
I'VE HEARD IT!
I'M DAMNED IF I LET RAM GET THEIR HANDS ON--
ARRGH!
BLAM! BLAM!
R-r-r-r-r-P
WHAT IN--
SNIF SNIF
SMELLS LIKE... GUNPOWDER? BUT...
NO ONE'S USED GUNPOWDER IN ALMOST FIVE HUNDRED...
...YEARS...

NEXT: BUCK IS ALIVE AND **EVERYBODY** WANTS HIM! **RAM!** NEO! A PRINCESS NAMED **ARDALA** AND A SPACE PIRATE NAMED **BLACK BARNEY!** JOIN US NEXT ISSUE ON... "**THE PLEASURE PLANETOID!**" DON'T MISS IT!

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THE GAUNTLET

A BUCK ROGERS® boardgame for two players

By
Tom Wham

"You can count on me, Mr. President."

The speakerphone clicked off and the room fell silent. Col. Buck Rogers could see the reluctance on the faces around him. They knew that if they asked him to volunteer, he would. And they knew that if he volunteered, he would die.

And no one wanted to be the one to ask Buck Rogers to die.

"I understand Dr. Huer has put some new tricks in the Wraith," one general said. "If anybody can pull this off ..." His voice trailed off into an uneasy mumble.

"We'll be fine," Rogers said, his face betraying no signs of emotion. As he rose and reached for his flight jacket, the other men around the table — some of the most powerful men in the free world — stood and saluted. A hint of a grin crossed Rogers' face.

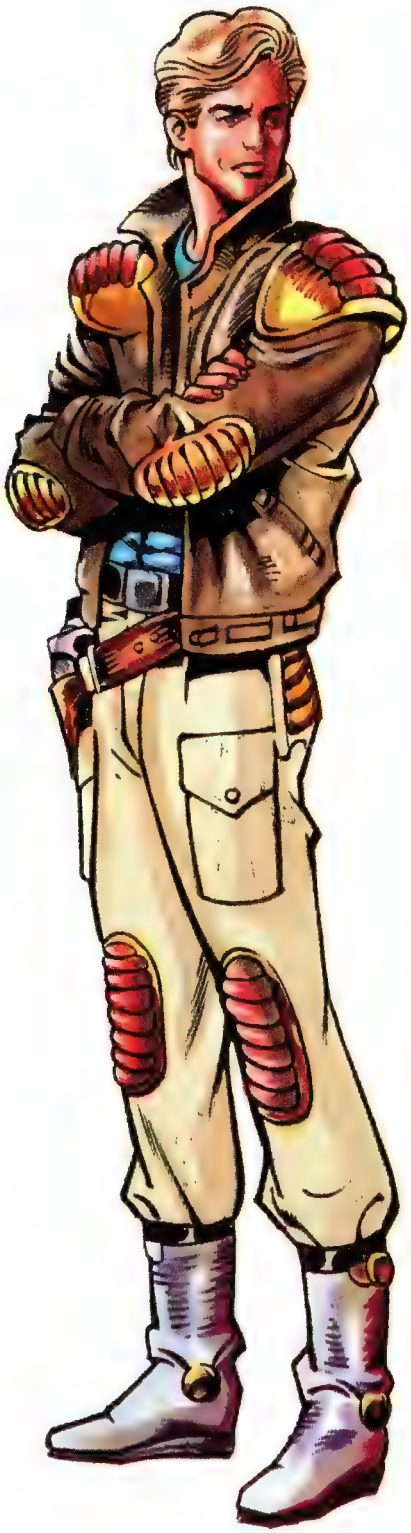
"Time to go to work."

The Gauntlet is a boardgame for two players. One player is Anatoly Kharkov, the renegade Russian general who, unhappy with the prospects of a lasting peace with the West, has stolen and activated Masterlink, a space-based weapons satellite controlled by an artificially intelligent computer. Through Masterlink, Kharkov can control not only the satellite itself, but a wide array of other Soviet military weapons.

The other player is Col. Buck Rogers, America's greatest pilot. Rogers controls his F-38 Wraith, as well as other U.S. military forces. To win the game, the Buck Rogers player must destroy the Masterlink and kill Kharkov. The Kharkov player wins if Rogers is killed and Kharkov survives, no matter how badly damaged Masterlink may be (one of the other things Masterlink can do is repair itself, so it must be utterly destroyed for the Buck player to win).

GETTING STARTED

First, decide which player will take which side. Then, carefully remove the map, the two control panels, and the counter sheet from inside this comics module. Place the map between the two players, put the Masterlink control panel



in front of the Kharkov player, and the Wraith control panel in front of the Buck Rogers player.

Next, separate the counters into three piles. The Buck Rogers player gets the 10 counters that represent the Wraith and various other U.S. weapons systems; the Kharkov player gets the 19 counters that represent the Masterlink and the many other Soviet weapons systems. The rest of the counters — ASATs, SEASATs, Gyro Shells, and Laser Bursts — are weapons markers used by both sides, and should be kept in a handy location. You will also need at least one six-sided die to play — two (one for each player) would be even better.

Before you start deploying your forces, take a quick look at the map. It is divided into rectangular spaces, which regulate movement. In **The Gauntlet**, pieces move vertically (up or down) or horizontally (side to side), but never diagonally. The land and sea areas at the bottom of the map are an exception — while some forces will be deployed there, there is no need for those forces to move. Some forces (MiGs and F-15s) can only operate in the bottom six rows of the map — the atmosphere. Masterlink and the other space satellites may only operate above the atmosphere. The F-38 Wraith and the space shuttles can operate in both. Weapons fire can travel all over the board without restriction. All this is gone into in greater detail later.

U.S. Setup: Buck Rogers is the U.S. player. All of the U.S. player's forces are placed on the map at the start of the game on the locations marked on the map. The Trident Sub starts in the ocean; the F-15s start in the two spaces above Space Tac and NASA; the three shuttles start at NASA; the F-38 Wraith starts in the Space Tac Airbase space; and the two Comsats and the U.S. Space Station start in the U.S. orbit spaces. Also, the Buck Rogers player gets six ASAT markers in each wing box on the Wraith control panel.

Soviet Setup: Anatoly Kharkov is the Soviet player. None of the Soviet

forces begin the game on the map except the Masterlink, which is placed on the space marked on the map. The rest of the Soviet pieces should be organized near your control panel, to be brought into play as the game goes on.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

The Gauntlet is played in turns, and each turn is divided into four steps. These four steps take place in the same order each turn, with the exception of the very first turn, in which the U.S. player gets a slight (and much-needed) advantage. The four steps are:

1. The Soviet player takes up to three actions.

2. The U.S. player takes up to two actions.

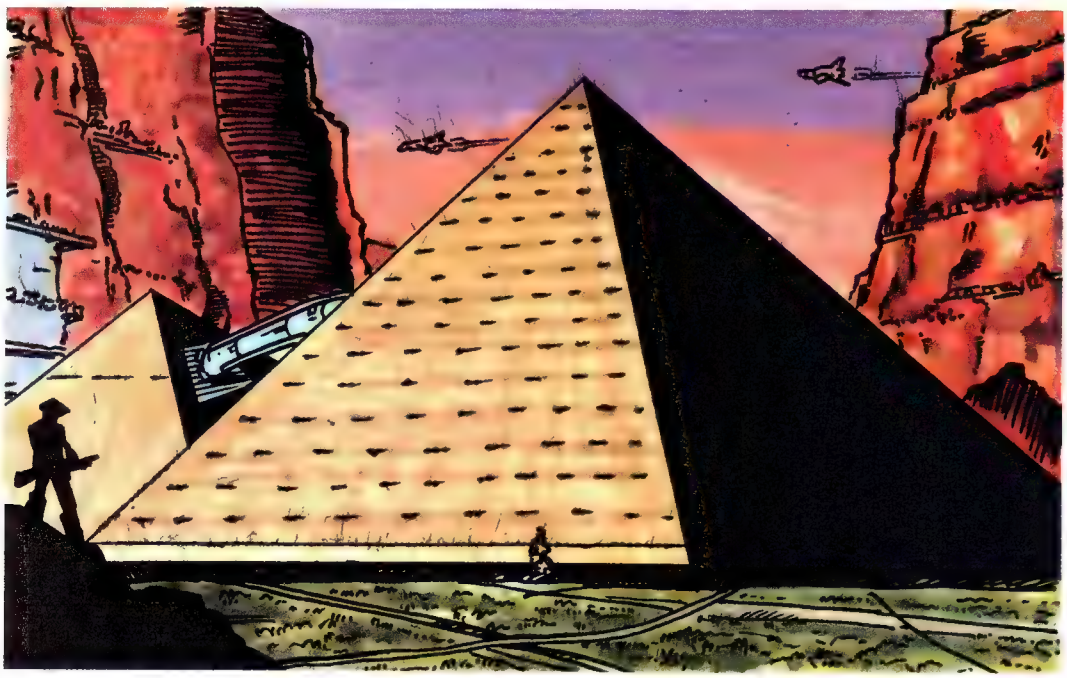
3. Determine the effect of Soviet laser fire (if any).

4. The Soviet player moves **all** missiles and shells.

An action consists of activating a piece by placing it on the map (or simply indicating a piece that is already on the map), moving it, and firing its weapon. A piece may also fire without moving, or even move without firing — any of these things is an action. A piece may not fire and then move.

When firing a weapon, the player doing the firing takes one of the weapon markers (ASAT, SEASAT, Gyro Shell, or Laser Burst) and places it on the weapon fired. Laser fire crosses the board instantly and is resolved in Step 3; the other weapons travel across the board more slowly, and are moved in Step 4. More details are given in Combat, below.

The only exception to this four-step procedure is the very first turn. In that turn, the Soviet player does not get to move. Start with Step 2. Since there will be no Soviet laser fire, you can skip Step 3 and move on to Step 4. After the first turn, however, be sure to do all four steps each turn.



MOVEMENT

Masterlink and the other Soviet satellites may only move one space per turn. Both sides' space shuttles and the F-15s may move up to two spaces per turn. The F-38 Wraith may move up to three spaces per turn at the beginning of the game, but after both U.S. Comsats and the U.S. Space Station have been destroyed, the F-38 is limited to two spaces per turn.

Movement is made from one space to an adjacent space, either horizontally or vertically. Diagonal movement is not allowed.

No more than three units may occupy a space. There is no limit to the number of weapon markers (ASATs, Gyro Shells, etc.) that may be in a space. Soviet and U.S. units may occupy the same space, as long as the limit of three is not exceeded.

Units may never move off the map. If a weapon marker travels off the map, it is out of play. Return the marker to the central pile for later use.

Weapons markers move only in Step 4. The Soviet player can move all the weapons markers (both U.S. and Soviet) in any order he chooses. The weapons markers can only go in the direction they were aimed in when they were fired, and have a set rate of movement — two spaces per turn. But by careful manipulation of which weapon moves before which other, the Soviet player can move enemy weapons into the path of his own.

ASATs and SEASATs move their two spaces per turn until they leave the board. Gyro Shells, on the other hand, are a much shorter-range weapon; after a single two-space move (in Step 4 of the turn they were fired), a Gyro Shell marker that has not hit anything is removed from play.

COMBAT

When the Soviet player places a Laser Burst marker on a target, or when one of the other weapon markers (ASATs, SEASATs. or Gyro Shells) enters a space with an enemy unit or weapon marker, there is a chance the target may be destroyed. Roll one die, and consult the following chart:

Weapon Type	**Die roll or less to hit**
Laser Burst	3
ASAT	4
SEASAT (2 rolls)	4
Gyro Shell	5

If the number rolled is equal to or less than the number on the chart (for example, a roll of 1, 2, 3, or 4 with an ASAT), then the weapon hits. When a weapon marker hits, it is removed from the board; if it misses, it continues to move, until it either runs into something else it may try to hit (roll the die again) or moves off the board. If a Laser Burst misses, however, it is removed from the board immediately.

The SEASAT gets to roll twice when it attacks the enemy. If *either* roll is a 4 or less, the target is destroyed. If there is more than one target in the space, and both rolls are 4 or less, then the SEASAT destroys two targets! (see "Multiple Targets," below).

If any unit or weapon marker other than the Masterlink or F-38 Wraith is successfully hit, it is destroyed and removed from the board. The Masterlink and the F-38 can absorb a lot more damage before they are destroyed.

When Masterlink takes a hit (or multiple hits), the Soviet player decides which parts of Masterlink are destroyed by placing one "hit" marker for each hit in one of the boxes on the Masterlink Control Panel. Once a component has been hit once, it is destroyed. The Masterlink components are:

Laser Bank: Masterlink has two of these, and may fire two Laser Bursts per turn as long as they are in operation. If one is destroyed, Masterlink may fire only one Laser Burst per turn; if both are

destroyed, Masterlink may not fire any Laser Bursts.

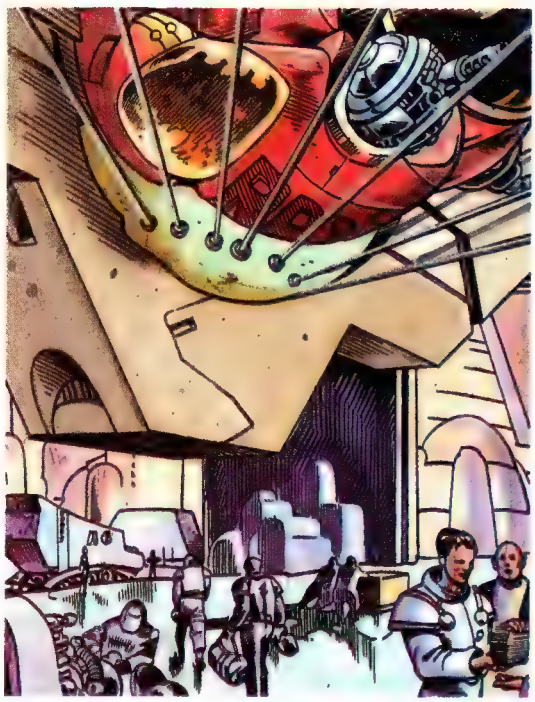
Gyro Shell Gun: While this is still in operation, Masterlink may fire one Gyro Shell per turn. Once it is destroyed, Masterlink cannot fire Gyro Shells.

Communications: Once Communications are destroyed, the Soviet player may not activate any more Soviet units except for space shuttles that are already on the map. The Soviet player should keep this component operational for as long as possible.

Thruster: If the Thruster is destroyed, Masterlink may no longer move.

Titanium Armor, Radar: These are essentially "free" hits. Masterlink is not affected in any way by their destruction. Therefore, these should be the first components selected by the Soviet player to be destroyed.

Kharkov, Computer: These are always the last things to be destroyed, for a simple reason. If Kharkov is killed, the game is over and the U.S. player wins. If the Computer is destroyed, Masterlink's artificial intelligence will flee the satellite, downloading itself to another Soviet satellite, leaving Kharkov to take the damage. This also ends the game in the favor of the U.S. player.



Like Masterlink, when Buck's F-38 Wraith takes a hit (or multiple hits), the U.S. player decides where to place the hit markers on his control panel. Again, a single hit will destroy a component of Buck's plane. The components are:

Left and Right Wing: Each wing carries 6 ASAT missiles. If a wing is destroyed before all its ASATs have been fired, the missiles are destroyed as well. Also, if either wing is destroyed while the Wraith is still in the atmosphere (the bottom six rows of the map), then the Wraith crashes and the Soviet player wins.

Gyro Shell Gun: While this is operational, the Wraith may fire one Gyro Shell per turn. Once this is destroyed, it may not.

Engine: Once the Engine is destroyed, the F-38 may no longer move. Also, if the engine is destroyed while the Wraith is still in the atmosphere, then the Wraith will come crashing to Earth and the Soviet player wins.

Cryo Escape Pod: If this component is destroyed, Buck may not escape the damaged Wraith and go into suspended animation, limiting the extent of the U.S. victory (see "Winning The Game," below).

Aileron and Nose Cone: If either of these is destroyed, Buck cannot safely land the F-38, limiting the extent of the U.S. victory (see "Winning The Game," below).

Communications and Astro Instruments: These are essentially "free" hits — losing them doesn't affect the Wraith's abilities at all.

Buck: If the Buck Rogers square is hit, then the game is over and the Soviet player wins.

SPECIAL COMBAT RULES

Buck Saving Throw: Because of Buck's extraordinary skill as a pilot, each time a hit is made on the Wraith, the Buck player may roll a die as a "saving throw." The number needed is always equal to or less than the Wraith's current movement rate. If the roll succeeds, the hit on the Wraith does not count!

At the beginning of the game, the Wraith has a movement of up to 3 spaces per turn, so the Buck player's saving throw is 3 or less. If the Wraith's movement is reduced to 2 by the loss of all three U.S. satellites, then the saving throw is also reduced to 2. And if the Wraith's engine is knocked out, its movement is reduced to zero, and the Buck player no longer gets a saving throw.

If the Wraith is hit more than once in a single turn, the Buck player gets saving throws against each hit, rolling each save separately.

Multiple Attacks and Multiple Targets: If a SEASAT, mine, or several ASATs (or some other combination of attacks) all gang up on a single unit, roll each attack separately — if any one of them is hit, the unit is destroyed.

If there is more than one target in a space, roll randomly to see which units are hit. For example, Masterlink and two shuttles are attacked by a SEASAT and an ASAT. After rolling all the attacks, the U.S. player gets two hits. To determine which Soviet units are hit, the players agree to assign random numbers to them: 1 or 2, the first shuttle; 3 or 4, the second shuttle; and 5 or 6, Masterlink. The dice come up 1 and 5, so the first shuttle is destroyed and Masterlink takes a hit. Note that if both rolls had indicated the same target (say, a 1 and a 2), then that target would be hit twice. In the case above, the first shuttle would be hit twice, and the second hit would be overkill and wasted.

THE UNITS

All U.S. units are placed on the board at the beginning of the game, and move around on the board until they are destroyed or the game is over. This is not true for all Soviet units. Only Masterlink begins the game on the map; and while some units are placed on the map and get to move around and fire weapons, there is another type of Soviet unit that is played directly on top of a U.S. unit, eliminating both pieces from play. Placing one of these units on the map counts as one of the Soviet player's three actions in Step One of the game-turn. The various units are explained in detail below.

Soviet Units

Attack Weather Satellite: This unit does not move or fire, but is played directly on top of the U.S. Space Station. When this happens, both units are taken off the map and discarded.

Bogus Fishing Trawler: This unit does not move or fire, but is played directly on top of the NASA space. When this happens, the trawler and all U.S. Space Shuttles that have not already been launched are taken off the map and discarded.

Killer Sub: This unit does not move or fire, but is played directly on top of the U.S. Trident Sub. When this happens, both units are taken off the map and discarded.

MiG: These units do not move or fire, but are played directly on top of a U.S. F-15. When this happens, both units are taken off the map and discarded.

Firing Squad Satellites: These units do not move or fire, but are played directly on top of a U.S. Comsat. When this happens, both units are taken off the map and discarded.

Soviet Shuttle: These units are placed on the map when activated, and may move and fire. When first deployed, they must be placed on the map in any

empty space within three spaces of Masterlink. A Soviet Shuttle may move up to two spaces per turn and has two weapons systems: An unlimited number of ASATs, and a laser with a range of two spaces.

Hunter-Killer Mines: These units are placed on the map when activated, in any empty space within three spaces of Masterlink. A Hunter-Killer Mine may move one space per turn. The H-K Mine automatically detonates if the Wraith, a U.S. Shuttle, or any U.S.-fired weapon marker enters the H-K Mine's space, or if the mine enters a space with any of these units or markers in it. When the mine is detonated, roll one die. That is how many hits the units in the space take. If there are more hits than units to take the damage, then all units are destroyed. If there are more units, roll randomly to see which are hit. Masterlink can be damaged by a H-K Mine explosion, if the Mine is in the same space as Masterlink when it goes up.

Rail Gun: This unit is placed on the map when activated, in any empty space within three spaces of Masterlink. The Rail Gun may move one space per turn. The Rail Gun can fire one Gyro Shell per turn.

Orbiting Laser Gun: This unit is placed on the map when activated, in any empty space within three spaces of Masterlink. The Orbiting Laser Gun may move one space per turn. The Orbiting Laser Gun has a single laser with unlimited range; it may attack any U.S. unit except the Trident Sub and Space Tac.

Protective Satellite: These units are placed on the map when activated, in any empty space within three spaces of Masterlink. The Protective Satellite may move one space per turn. When any U.S. unit or weapon marker enters the same space as a Protective Satellite, it detonates, doing one hit of damage. This will destroy any single unit except the Wraith. After detonation, the Protective Satellite is removed from the map.

Ground Laser Stations: Sari Shagen and Peblinsk are two ground-based Soviet laser weapons. They are not placed on the map and cannot be targeted by U.S. forces. Each Ground Laser Station may fire one laser burst of unlimited range each turn. Only the Trident Sub and Space Tac may not be targeted. The Ground Laser Stations are unreliable, however; each time the Soviet player wishes to use one, he must roll the number printed on the counter or less on one die (4 for Sari Shagen, and 2 for Peblinsk). If the roll succeeds, the Soviet player may place the laser burst where he wishes and play continues normally. If the roll fails, the Ground Laser Station malfunctions, is removed from play permanently, and the action used to fire it is wasted.

Masterlink: Masterlink, as detailed above, is Kharkov's headquarters and the most powerful piece in the Soviet arsenal. Masterlink may move one space and fire one of its three weapons as a single action; to fire the second weapon would require a second action, and firing the third weapon would require a third action. It may also fire its weapons without moving at all. Masterlink is armed with two lasers and a Gyro Shell Gun.

U.S. Units

Trident Nuclear Sub: The Trident Sub starts the game on the map, and does not move. The first time it is activated, it fires three SEASAT missiles. On each subsequent activation, it fires a single SEASAT.

F-15: The F-15s start the game on the map, and may move one or two spaces per turn. They are restricted to the bottom six rows of the map (the atmosphere). The first time they fire, each F-15 fires two ASAT missiles. On each subsequent activation, they fire a single ASAT.

Comsats and U.S. Space Station: These units start the game on the map, but they cannot move and have no weapons. As long as at least one of them remains on the map, however, The F-38 Wraith has a maximum speed of three spaces and a saving throw of three.

U.S. Space Shuttles: These units start the game on the map at NASA.

U.S. Space Shuttles may move one or two spaces per turn, and may go anywhere on the map. Each shuttle has two weapon systems, an unlimited supply of ASATs and a Gyro Shell Gun.

F-38 Wraith: As detailed above, this is Buck Roger's one-of-a-kind plane. It can travel anywhere on the map, can move up to three spaces per turn, and is armed with 12 ASATs and a Gyro Shell Gun.

WINNING THE GAME

The U.S. player wins if Masterlink and Kharkov are destroyed; that is, if all of Masterlink's hit boxes are filled in.

The Soviet player wins if Buck Rogers is killed *and* Kharkov lives, no matter how badly Masterlink is otherwise damaged.

For advanced players or tournament play, there are various levels of victory, such as:

U.S. Absolute Victory (3 points): Buck destroys Masterlink and returns safely to earth. This can only be accomplished if the Wraith's engine, aileron, nose cone, both wings, and of course Buck, have not been hit.

U.S. Total Victory (2 points): Buck destroys Masterlink and safely ejects into his Cryo Escape Pod. This can be accomplished only if Buck and the Cryo Pod have not been hit.

U.S. Victory (1 point): Buck destroys Masterlink, but also dies, unable to safely land the Wraith or use the Cryo Escape Pod.

Soviet Total Victory (2 points): Masterlink is not destroyed, but Buck escapes into his Cryo Pod to fight again 500 years later.

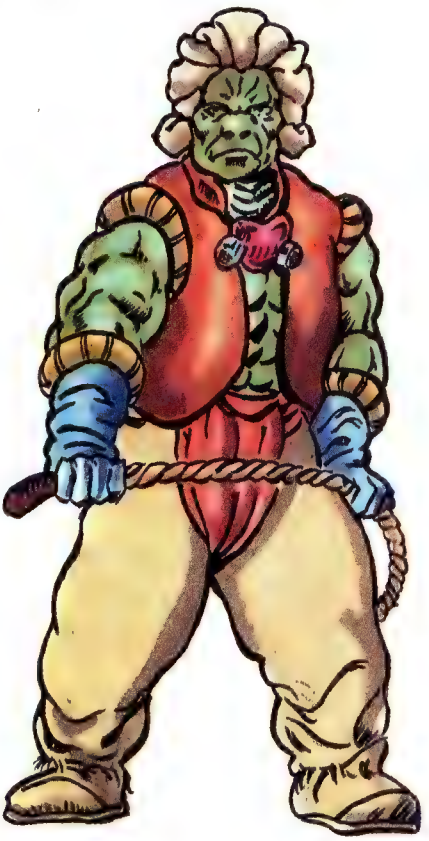
Soviet Absolute Victory (3 points): Masterlink is not destroyed and Buck is killed.

STRATEGY TIPS

Buck: Use your shuttles, the sub, and your F-15s before the Soviets eliminate them. Remember, you get to move after the Soviets, so you can stay out of the way of his ASATs and Gyro Shells.

Kharkov: If the U.S. doesn't activate its shuttles and subs right away, knock them out. Otherwise, ignore them. Use the Hunter-Killer Mines and the Protective Satellites to guard Masterlink, especially if there are a lot of U.S. shuttles up. Bump off the Comsats and the U.S. Space Station as soon as possible to reduce the Wraith's speed and saving throw.

Good luck!



Into The 25th Century!

A journey into the universe of the XXVc™ game

By Kim Mohan

(Art By Continuity Studios, Burbank)

Just what is the world of the 25th century?

Fortunately, you don't have to wait 500 years to find out. The XXVc™: The 25th Century Role-Playing Game has all the answers — and the boxed set will be coming in for a landing at your neighborhood game store very soon.

Chock full of booklets, maps, and other components, the box is packed tighter than the cargo hold of a Krait Fighter. (As you'll find out in the spaceship descriptions, the cargo hold of a Krait Fighter is *always* packed tight.) And those components hold enough information to test the capacity of the 25th century's most sophisticated Digital Personality. (As you'll find out, Digital Personalities have... well, you get the idea.)

The 25th century is a time of great opportunity. Mankind has moved out into the solar system. The moon, the inner planets, and the asteroid belt are no longer dead worlds; instead, they are the homes of new civilizations — some of them remarkably sophisticated, considering the length of time they've been in existence.

The 25th century is a time of fantastic advances in science and technology. The science of genetics is no longer concerned with creating a new hybrid of corn or a hardier strain of wheat — scientists have discovered how to manipulate the genetic code of humans and other animals. The result is a new group of creatures known as gennies (genetically altered humans), each species tailored to maximize its chances for survival on and around the un-Earthlike worlds of the solar system. The harnessing of nuclear fusion has opened new vistas in transportation between planets; ships can now travel from Earth to Mars in less time than it takes in the 20th century to drive from New York to Los Angeles. Computer technology has advanced to the point where entire personalities can be encoded and implanted in memory banks — a form of immortality, for those who can afford it.

But the 25th century is not without its dark side. Planet Earth, the once majestic home of mankind, has gone downhill with dizzying speed. Earth is an economically and ecologically ruined planet, struggling to recover but knowing the battle will be incredibly tough to win. The only bright spots are the pockets of affluence known as arcologies — titanic, self-contained cities inside which the residents enjoy fairly comfortable lives.

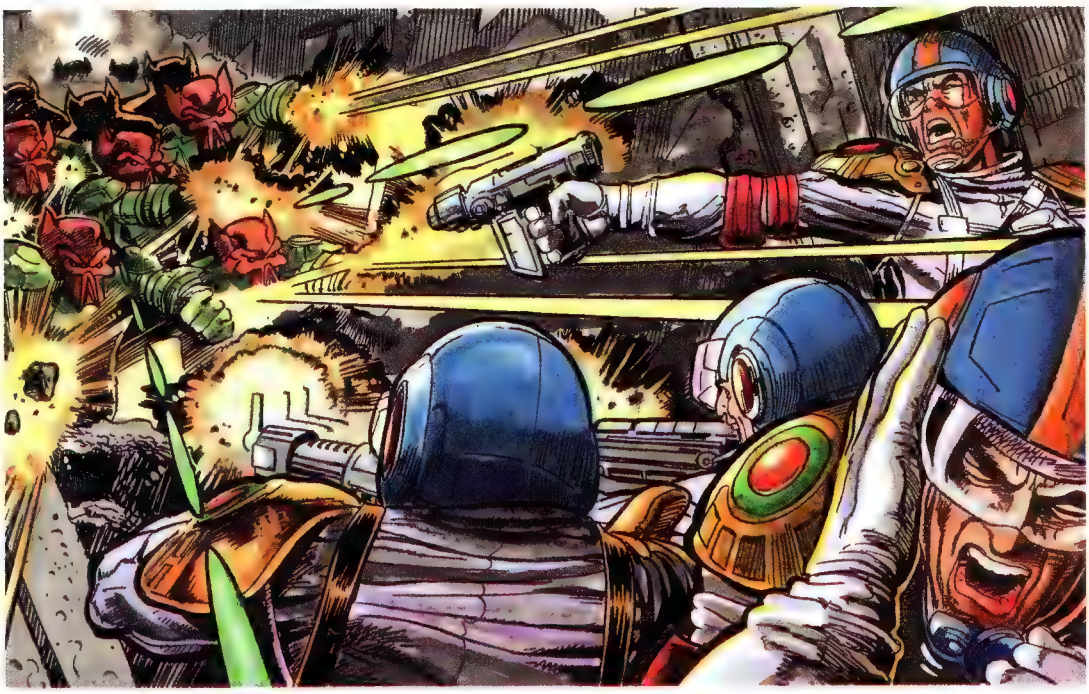
The arcologies might be able to use their wealth and influence to help the rest of the planet's population get a foothold on recovery — except that the cities, like the rest of the planet, are under the control of

"Even though its ability to resist is woefully weak, Earth is not about to go down without a fight."

RAM. The most powerful political, economic, and military force in the solar system, RAM is headquartered on Mars, but its tentacles extend across millions of miles. They are wrapped especially tightly around Earth, which RAM intends to plunder and exploit until the planet is devastated to the point of no return.

Even though its ability to resist is woefully weak, Earth is not about to go down without a fight. The fledgling New Earth Organization, known as NEO, has dedicated itself to undermining RAM's power and authority in anyway it can. With a patched together space fleet and a disjointed collection of small groups of combat soldiers, the victories NEO can win are small ones — but small ones are better than none at all.

And now, in the year 2456, a new element has been introduced into the mix. In a major tactical and psychological coup, NEO has managed to recover and revive the body of one Anthony "Buck" Rogers, a legendary Earth hero from the last days of the 20th century. Long revered by humanity for his heroic efforts in averting a global catastrophe, Buck was also thought to be long dead. But he *did* survive, spending long centuries in suspended animation. Word of his "rebirth" is spreading through out the inner worlds; now more than just a legend, Buck is a living example to freedom fighters everywhere of what a single man, full of courage and the will to live, can accomplish against the forces of brutality and oppression.



That's a summary of the stage upon which role-playing adventures in the XXVc™ game will be played out. Now, here are some of the props we're giving you to make this stage come alive:

Characters & Combat: This book is the heart of the game system — 96 pages of rules, statistics, and descriptions containing everything a referee and a group of players need to create characters, spaceships, and the other essential ingredients of the XXVc game universe.

Players can choose from several races for their characters, including true humans (Terrans); mildly gene-altered Mercurians and Lunarians; and semi-humans such as Delphs, who populate the ocean depths, and Tinkers, specially designed for situations calling for small size and extraordinary dexterity.

Every character has a career: rocketjock, rogue, warrior, scout, medic, or engineer. Just as in other role-playing games, a party of adventuring characters has a better chance of succeeding if a variety of careers are represented in the group. And for even further variety, each character has a wide range of skills to choose from. The process of creating a talented and powerful party of player characters can almost be a game in itself — but that's really only a minor prelude to the action that awaits the party.

The rule book also tells you everything you need to know about spaceships, ranging from the smallest fighters to the biggest battlers: how they work, what they cost, what each type can and can't do. Operating a ship is one of the most important things a group of player characters will do, whether they're just trying to get from one place to another, or whether they're bearing down on an enemy vessel in the blackness of space.

And that's where the "Combat" part of the book comes in. The rules include complete information for handling ship vs. ship battles as well as combat on an individual level. Ship armament ranges from blistering laser beams to immensely powerful kinetic cannons that can obliterate a small vessel in one shot. In the category of personal weapons, the old standbys —

"What is life like on Venus, where only the highest mountaintops can support anything resembling "normal" life . ."

knives, clubs, swords — are still around and still able to do damage. Sometimes, in the urban wasteland of an Earth city or the airless, lightless void of an asteroid mining outpost, these will be the best (and only) weapons available. At other times, when the items and their power supplies are available, characters will want to arm themselves with the high-tech weapons of the 25th century such as laser pistols, sonic stunners, and rifles that fire tiny rockets with their own internal guidance systems.

Players and referees who are familiar with the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game system will immediately recognize a lot of similarity between that game and the XXVc™ game rules. Obviously, this is no accident. We used this approach in the design of the XXVc game for two good reasons. First, we know from years of experience (yours and ours) that the AD&D® game *works*, and we could do a lot worse than building upon the quality of an established winner. Second, the many thousands of people who have played and enjoyed the AD&D game will find it very easy to make the transition to the XXVc game system; even though the particulars are very different.

The World Book: This is what the 25th century is all about—at least, as much of that information as we could stuff into a 64-page book. Here you'll find full statistics and descriptions of every place — from Mercury to the moons of Saturn — that has been investigated, exploited, and transformed during mankind's exodus from Earth.

What is life like on Venus, where only the highest mountaintops can support anything resembling "normal" life and the acidic morass of the lowlands is home to a bizarre race of reptilian humanoids? What about Mars, the planet that has been most drastically changed, with its massive urban complexes and its majestic space elevator? And what about the asteroid belt, where the true individualists of the solar system have managed to keep their independence and form a strong community at the same time?

All of these places, and a dozen others, are brought to life in the World Book. By putting together facts from each description, you'll get a picture of how the various alliances and conflict situations all fit together, and you'll see a multitude of ways in which player characters can affect the balance of power. The adventuring possibilities are practically unlimited.

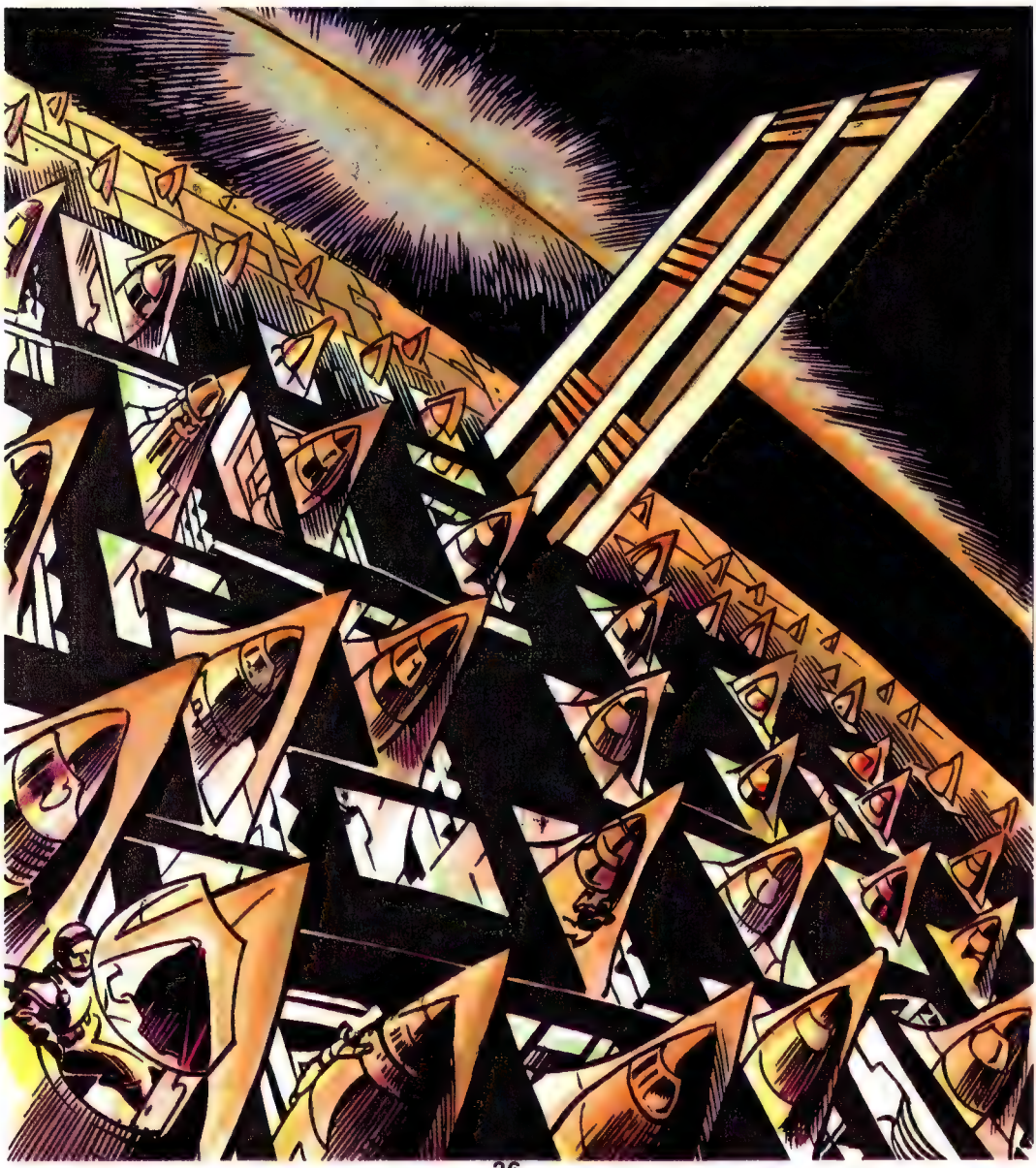
And to help the referee take advantage of these possibilities, the World Book also includes a section on how to construct your own adventures for the XXVc game — general guidelines, combined with some specific advice, that will have a group of players immersed in the vibrant game universe faster than you can say "Prepare for liftoff!"

Better yet: To really get you playing quickly, the World Book contains a complete short adventure, "Ghost in the Machine," designed to enable a group to be playing the game literally within minutes after the box is opened. When you get this brief taste of what adventuring in the XXVc game universe is like, you'll be even more eager to cook up ideas of your own.

Technology Book: A close companion to the World Book, this piece of the package is 32 pages of statistics and descriptions that detail the science and technology of the 25th century. Here's where you'll find out about terraforming, the special ways in which mankind has tackled the task of making other worlds habitable; orbital colonies, the "cities in space" that date back to the earliest days of interplanetary exploration; and the advances in medicine and biotechnology that have made the term "minor injury" practically obsolete.

Most of the Technology Book is devoted to the gadgetry and gear that's available to spacefaring adventurers in the 25th century. For instance, there are: "smart clothes" with integrated wiring that provides heating and cooling, electronic shielding, and other features; security devices and ship sensors; and spacesuits and other types of armor and protection.

And, of course, weapons — specifically, the devices that have been developed since the 20th century and which have made so-called "conventional" guns and ammunition a thing of the past. What are the advantages of a heat gun over a laser pistol, and vice versa? When is a rocket pistol a good thing to have, and when would a sonic stunner be a lifesaver instead? By



reading about the weaponry of the 25th century, with each item described in game terms, players will be able to answer these questions before they equip their characters for an expedition into the unknown.

The Maps: The XXVc™ game box contains four poster-size maps in full color, each one designed for use in certain adventuring situations.

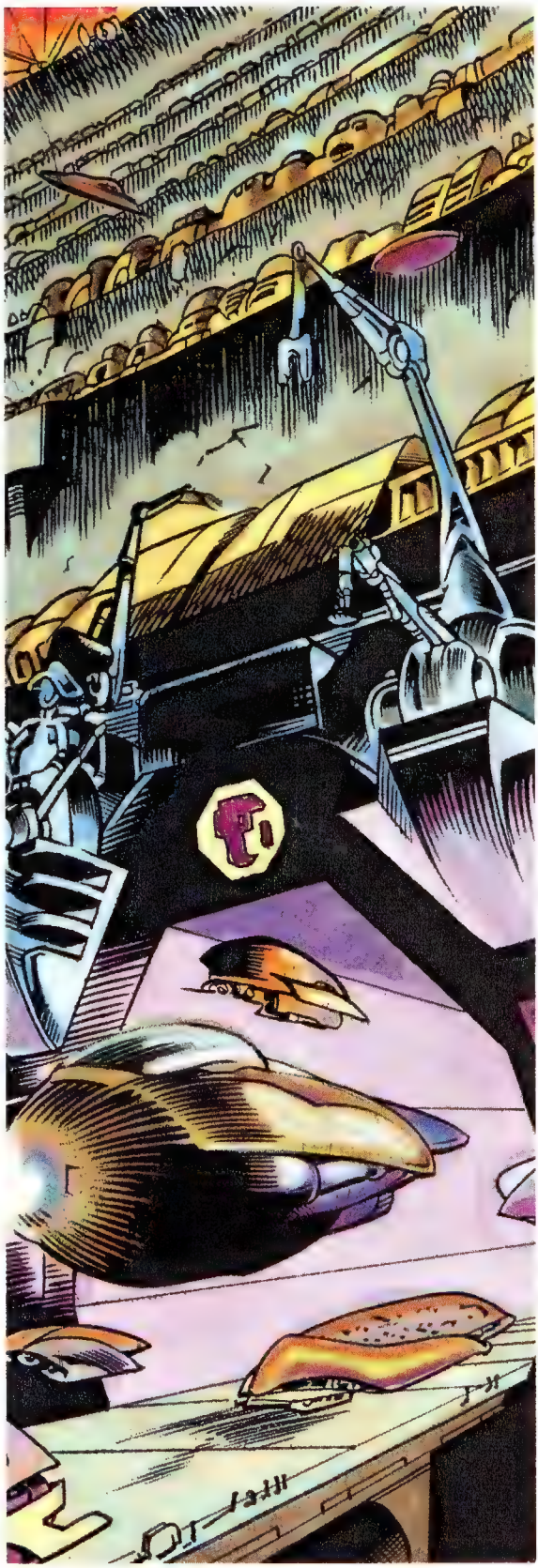
For exploring in a modern city unlike any place on Earth, there's an overhead view of the Tycho Spaceport, one of the showpieces of present-day civilization on the moon.

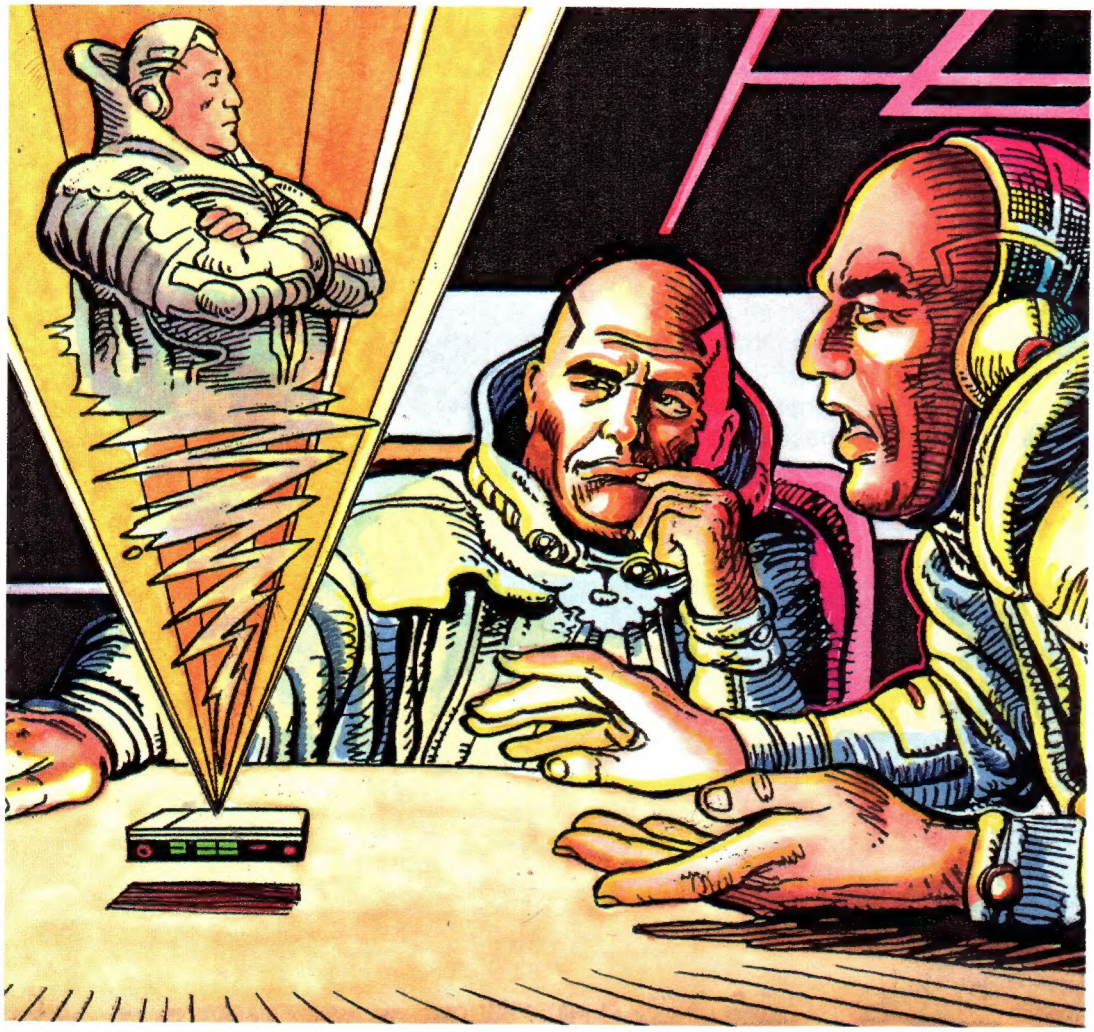
When characters are aboard a ship, their locations and activities can be tracked on a map sheet that includes cross-section views of the various compartments of two typical ship types. All of the cross section maps on this sheet are scaled for use with 25mm miniatures.

For getting from one place to another across the vastness of space, you'll make use of the solar system display that records the location and movement of the four inner planets plus major outposts in the asteroid belt. Also in the box is a special "ruler" that's used to chart courses between the planets and help you figure out how long it will take to get from one world to another.

Finally, for those inevitable and exciting battles between ships, we've taken a section of space and marked it off with a hex grid, so that you can keep track of who's doing what to whom while fighters, cruisers, and battlers zip around from place to place in the arena of combat.

The counters: The tools you use to keep track of ships and planets are part of a sheet of die-cut counters that's also in the box. The counter sheet also includes dozens of number markers that have a variety of possible uses; the amount of money a character is carrying, the amount of damage a ship has taken, the number of hit points your character has lost — for any instance where you need to keep track of numbers.

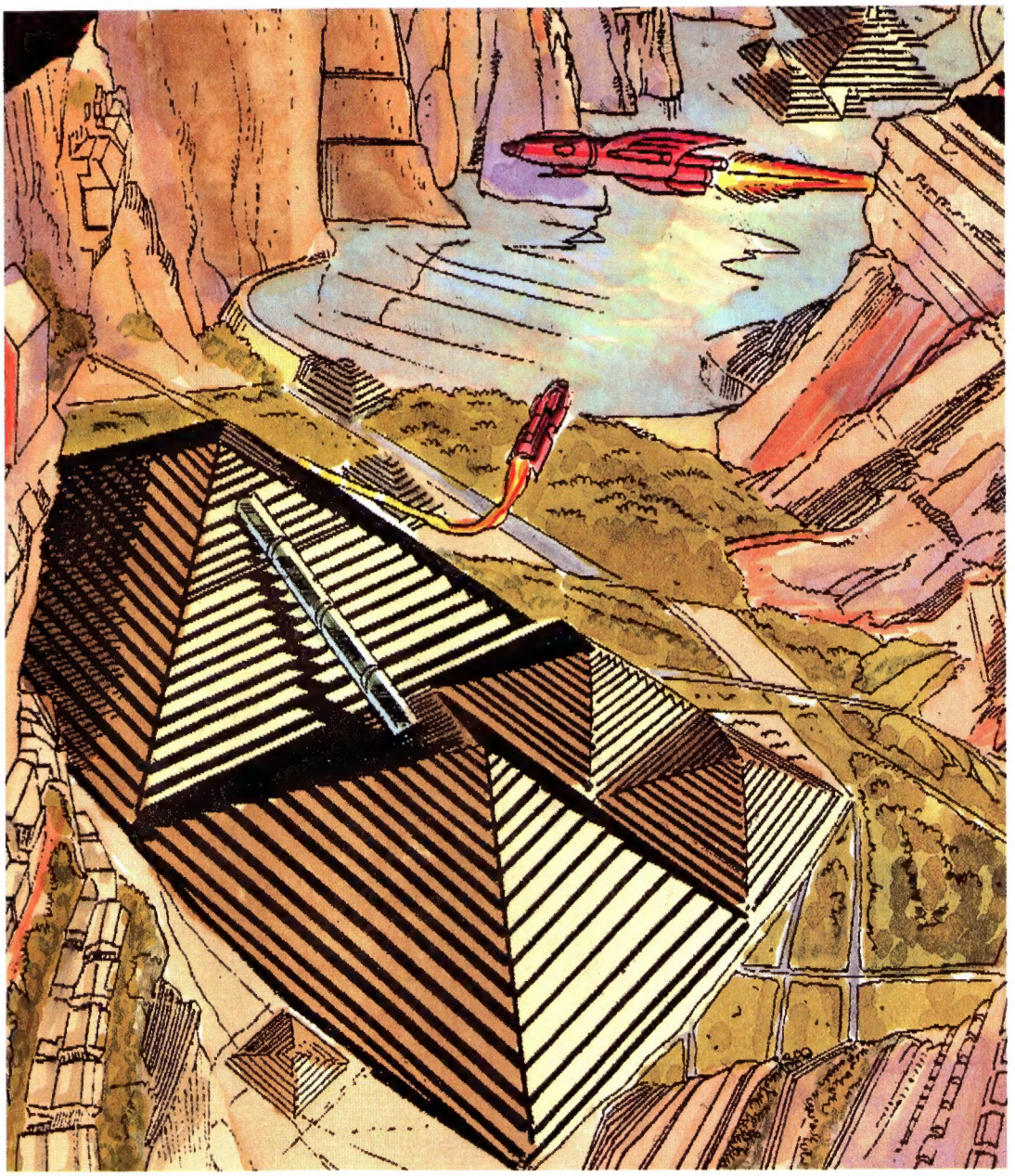




The cards: The 24 full-page cards in the XXVc™ game box are both colorful and functional. Seven of them contain full color portraits plus brief biographies and game statistics for major nonplayer characters in the XXVc game universe. There's Buck Rogers, of course, plus good guys like Dr. Huer and Wilma Deering, and bad guys like Simund Holzerhein and Killer Kane. If you're familiar with any of the other BUCK ROGERS® game products and books that TSR has published, then you already know what these characters are like. If you aren't familiar with them already, you'll be getting to know them quite well in the very near future.

Thirteen of the cards contain portraits and full statistics for spaceships, ranging from specific vessels such as Killer Kane's scout cruiser *Rogue* to generic types such as the massive battlers RAM uses to "keep the peace." Each ship card has a schematic diagram of its various compartments, which is used along with the number markers to keep track of damage that the vessel takes during combat.

On the other four cards are full-color maps of Mars, Venus, Earth, and Luna (the moon), showing the locations of each world's major cities, spaceports, and other physical features. As you get deeper into the XXVc game milieu, the place names on Mars will become as real — and at least as important — as the places of Earth are right now.



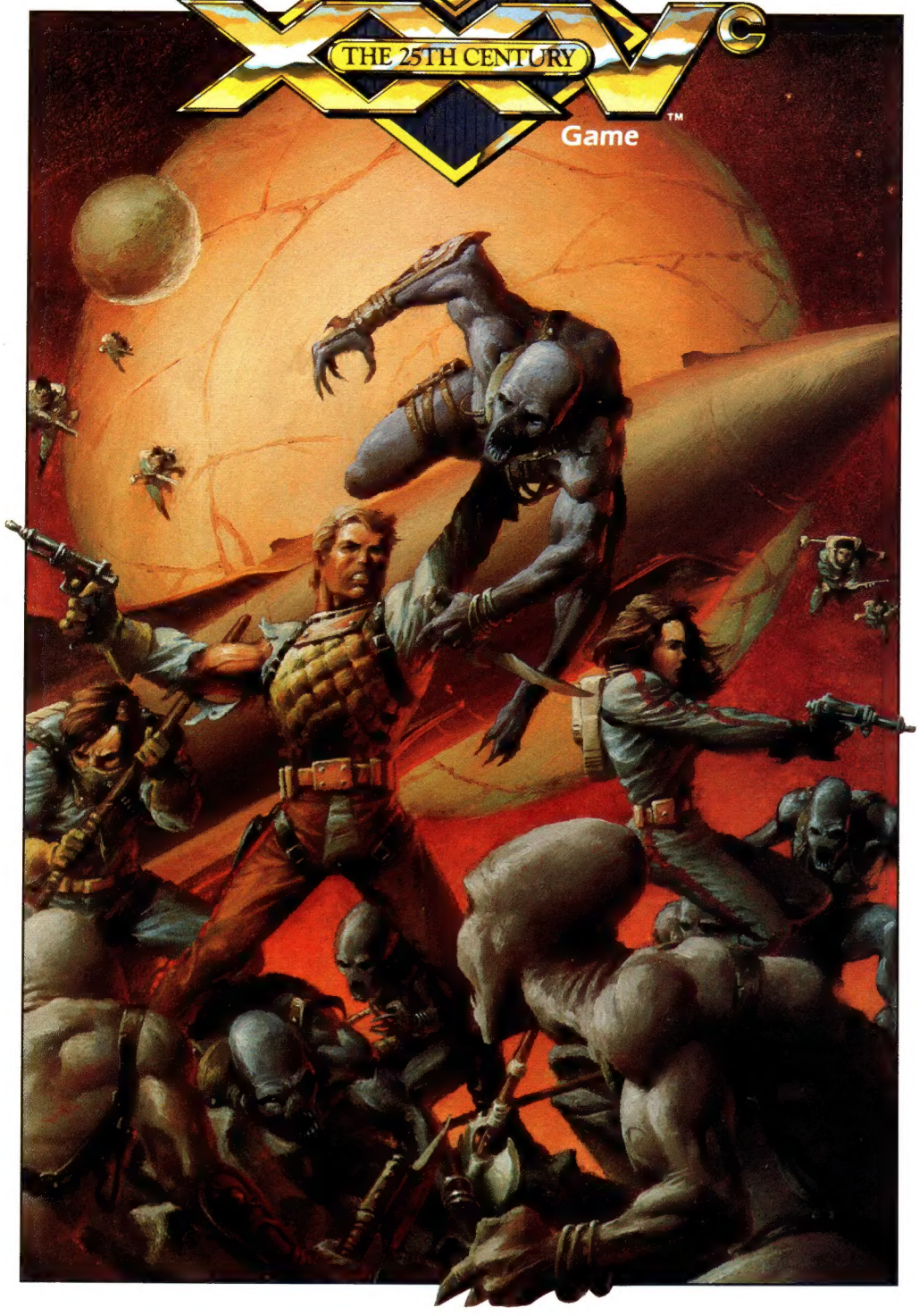
The screen: To prevent everyone from having to flip through the rule book while a horde of RAM troopers is coming over the hill, we've taken all of the important tables and statistical information and displayed them on a six-panel foldout screen that the referee and the players can use to find out something in a hurry. The screen won't stop a laser blast, but it can stand up in front of the referee to keep the player's prying eyes from seeing what he's up to.

And finally, the dice: For those who are new to the hobby of role-playing games, or those who can never have enough dice, the box *also* includes an assortment of the world's best random number generators. You see, even with all the advances in technology since the 20th century, the only way to get a truly random number from one to whatever is to pick up a whatever-sided die and roll it across the table.

It's nice to know that, even after four and a half centuries, some things haven't changed.

BUCK ROGERS® XXVC™

THE 25TH CENTURY Game



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